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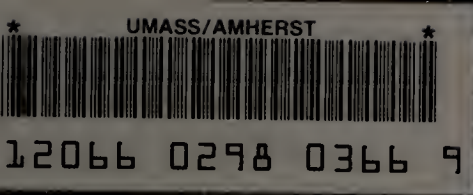
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**FIVE COLLEGE
DEPOSITORY**

A SYSTEMIC TRANSPERSONAL ADJUNCT
TO COUPLES COUNSELING:
INTEGRATING A GENDERED CONCEPT OF THE INNER CHILD

A Dissertation Presented

By

DOROTHY HOWARD CORRIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1994

School of Education

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DOROTHY HOWARD CORRIN

Approved as to style and content by:

John W. Wideman
John W. Wideman, Chair

Portia C. Elliott
Portia C. Elliott, Member

Marion B. Rhodes
Marion B. Rhodes, Member

Bailey W. Jackson
Bailey W. Jackson, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

*

There is only One of us - before and after all

Meditation and yoga

the beauty of the earth

consciousness-raising about

power

inner polarities outer differences

liberation partnership

and the experience of loving through time

keep teaching me this

In the words of a wise young child

who paused while weeding sunflowers and nasturtiums

to explain the wonders of the garden:

"It's God and Mother Nature, you know"

This work is dedicated to all of these -

and to the One of us

*

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Certain individuals and groups have contributed significantly to the learning process which yielded this dissertation. To each I am deeply grateful.

Jack Wideman, whose wisdom - born of his on-going search for truth and healing, whose commitment to students and to reflexive coherence in education, and whose capacities for empathy, humor, patience and faith - have all been of immeasurable importance in my development - as a therapist and a human being...

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My friend Emily Ecker, whose sincere and successful efforts to meet and embrace aspects of her Shadow-self and reclaim her projections of masculine power have given affirmation and inspiration to this priority in my life and work...

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The Re-Evaluation Co-Counseling community, which has long emphasized the wounding effects of Dominator conditioning on individuals and relationships and the necessity of addressing victim and oppressor patterns in its approach to emotional healing...

The Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, where intensive retreats allowed me to experience the healing and liberating effects of the practice of mindfulness...

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intellect, straightforward advice, frank responses, self-disclosures and quick down-to-earth wit have often buoyed my spirit, and whose aliveness and playfulness continue to prove to me the irreplaceable value of the Inner Child well into her ninth decade...

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And - the individuals, couples, families and children who have opened their hearts, shared their stories, allowed me to know and help them in therapy to the best of my ability - and fostered some of my most important learning...

To all who have participated in varied ways in shaping me and my work - and thereby in the generation, evolution and completion of this dissertation - I give heartfelt thanks.

* * *

ABSTRACT

A SYSTEMIC TRANSPERSONAL ADJUNCT TO COUPLES COUNSELING: INTEGRATING A GENDERED CONCEPT OF THE INNER CHILD

SEPTEMBER 1994

DOROTHY HOWARD CORRIN, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

M.Ed., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor John W. Wideman

Motivated by the struggles of couples seeking to create intimate and enduring partnerships, this study develops a structured self-help format for enhancement of couple relationships that can also be used as an adjunct to formal therapy. Couples and their counselors are guided in an exploration of two interwoven areas of concern: the Inner Child - and - the effects of gender conditioning.

To provide a theoretical basis for the creation of the practical instrument, a review was conducted of selected works from three major subject areas: the Inner Child, Gender Difference, and Couple Relationships. This research into psychological and self-help literature resulted in the synthesis and elaboration of a concept of the gendered Inner Child.

The identification of specific gender with what has usually been a gender-less concept contributes a systemic dimension to the multi-leveled child within. "Systemic"

here refers to the inclusion of both intra- and inter-personal psychological dynamics and consideration of the impact of social context and conditioning on problems and their possible solutions. The concept of the Inner Child has already been a highly effective vehicle for individual healing through many different approaches because of its ability to be utilized in the service of all four forces in psychology - psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, existential-humanistic, and transpersonal. With the addition of the systemic dimension, more of individual reality can be meaningfully addressed, and its potential for use with couples can be more fully explored.

The Couples Workbook is a practical application of the theoretical construct, to help couples differentiate the gendered Inner Child within themselves as a means of countering the effects of both childhood wounds and sexist conditioning on their intimate relationships. Consisting of sections of text interspersed with questions, exercises, and guided meditations, The Couples Workbook integrates Stone Center Self-in-Relation theory, the work of Riane Eisler and an emphasis on mindfulness to help couples move from "Dominator" to "Partnership" modes of relationship.

A questionnaire administered to experienced couples therapists elicited evaluations of the potential usefulness of the Workbook in professional practice. Responses indicated possible wide applicability.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness ... The full answer lies in the achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in love ... the most powerful striving in man, ... the most fundamental passion ... the force which keeps the human race together ... without (which) humanity could not exist for a day

There is hardly any activity, any enterprise, which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails so regularly, as love.

-Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, 1956

The association between marital distress and psychopathology has been the focus of considerable research by psychologists in recent years, and a number of investigations implicate marital distress and dysfunction in both the etiology and course of emotional disorder ... (One study) estimated that 50% of all who seek psychotherapy do so because of marital problems.

-I. Gotlib and S. McCabe, "Marriage and Psychopathology" in Fincham and Bradbury, The Psychology of Marriage, 1990

The interference of the "child of the past" in the present is often the basic cause of marital difficulties regardless of (what) seems to be the problem

-W.H. Missildine, Your Inner Child of the Past, 1963

In Western society men are encouraged to dread, abhor, or deny feeling weak or helpless, whereas women are encouraged to cultivate this state of being. The first and most important point, however, is that these feelings are common and inevitable to all, even though our cultural tradition unrealistically expects men to discard rather than to acknowledge them

-Jean Baker Miller, Toward A New Psychology of Women, 1976

The underlying problem is not men as a sex. The root of the problem lies in a social system in which the power of the blade is idealized - in which both men and women are taught to equate true masculinity with violence and dominance ... (and where) anything associated with women or femininity is automatically viewed as secondary

-Riane Eisler, The Chalice and the Blade, 1987

The quotations juxtaposed above are meant to reflect a progression in the development of this author's awareness of "The Problem" this dissertation attempts to address. This is, in part, that the goal of achieving an intimate and enduring adult love relationship seems to remain a daunting challenge for many, if not most, who aspire to it. There is mounting evidence in the form of proliferating social problems as well as psychological research which indicates that the cost of this collective failure is very high. With too little support or understanding from scattered extended families, very few positive role models, and a tendency to blame oneself, one's mate, the institution of marriage or the ideal of intimate collaboration, there is tremendous fuel for fruitless repetition of a cycle of attraction-disappointment-disintegration without significant learning and with small chance of success.

The problem is also that the relatively young field of psychotherapy has been even less developed in its capacity to provide theoretical and practical guidance to assist those stumbling on the path of intimate connectedness. In their 1986 Clinical Handbook of Marital Therapy, psychologist-editors Alan Gurman and Neil Jacobson could write that as late as the 1960's couples therapy, conducted for the most part to that point from the psychoanalytic perspective, had been "a hodgepodge of

unsystematically employed techniques grounded tenuously, if at all, in partial theories at best." According to editors Fincham and Bradbury in The Psychology of Marriage, published in 1990, American sociologists were the first group to begin to study "close personal relationships" in the 1920's, with psychologists turning major attention to the subject only in the 1960's and 70's.

Since that time, Family Systems theory and practice have emerged and developed as a collection of significantly different and often powerfully effective approaches to counseling individuals and couples as well as families. But as recently as five years ago, in the year-end issue of The Family Therapy Networker of 1988, experienced practitioner Richard Schwartz offered his candid assessment of the state of the art of couples counseling from his established position well within the field:

Most family therapy theories are based on the idea that when you get to the core of a family's problems, you usually find conflicts between the marital couple. But what do you do then? Systems-based theories get rather vague at this point.

At this time in the evolution of couples counseling, the fertile openness and flexibility of this long-standing theoretical confusion has blossomed into more of an embarrassment of riches, a plethora of approaches validated through clinical experience rather than research that

allows the practitioner to choose and integrate into his or her basic therapeutic orientation elements reflecting his or her own values and beliefs about intimate relationship on the basis of utility and effectiveness. In addition, there has been a recent outpouring of therapeutic writing on couples issues directly addressing the lay-public as well as fellow professionals in what appears to be a collective effort to solve the mystery of what works to help couple relationships survive and thrive, and thereby to help restore or build anew greater family and social stability.

Two of the essential ingredients of useful and effective couples therapy from this author's perspective have proven to be attention to the so-called Inner Child of both partners - and - education about gender difference and sexism. Intimate relationship is seriously constrained by defensive emotional and behavioral patterns developed by both people in response to childhood hurts. Sexism, the institutionalized interpretation of gender difference as male superiority and female inferiority, has severely distorted relations between men and women and fueled a seemingly endless and inevitable "war between the sexes."

These elements are often mentioned as important in various approaches to the treatment of couples - with the effects of "the perilous pilgrimage through childhood" on

marriage well explored by Harville Hendrix, and the Wellesley College Stone Center's Self-in-Relation Theory, in particular, emphasizing the crucial role of gender conditioning in couples counseling - in works that are included in the review in Chapter II. There is, however, a potential for integration of the concepts of the Inner Child with an emphasis on the value of gender sensitivity that has been neglected so far in current literature and practice. This integrative adjunctive approach may contribute particularly to the enhancement of empathic understanding and mutuality in couples, considered to be key determinants of satisfying relationships.

It is this author's perception that part of the reason for the underutilization of these valuable tools for helping couple relationships is the same epistemological stuckness that delayed the turning of serious psychotherapeutic attention to the problems of couplehood in the first place. This is the almost universally distorted set of beliefs about the nature, responsibilities and destiny of each gender that inherently and explicitly valued individual worldly achievement over intimate relationship success and automatically associated relational importances with female, and therefore secondary, concerns.

The Chalice and the Blade by Riane Eisler explores the historical basis of this very phenomenon, drawing on

archeological evidence to show that this "Dominator" or "Blade" mentality did not always govern human relations, and in fact, was established through the violent overthrow of an earlier peaceful, harmonious, highly developed civilization where order was based on affiliation or "linking rather than ranking" which apparently persisted for many thousands of years. Connecting the destruction of the non-matriarchal but woman-centered "Partnership" social organization with the origins of the reification of hierarchical valuing of human differences, Eisler also suggests that this latter tendency is the foundation for all warring, including and especially the so-called "war of the sexes." The purpose of this dissertation includes drawing the distinction between Dominator and Partnership modes of intimate relation and establishing the possibility of awareness and choice between them.

Method and Definition of Terms

This study attempts to respond to the widespread problem of struggling and too often failing couple relationships by offering both theoretical underpinnings and a practical approach to couples counseling that emphasizes and integrates exploration of the Inner Child with gender difference re-education through introducing the concepts of the Inner Girl and the Inner Boy. The Literature Review composing Chapter II will consist of

selected sources from three bodies of material: the Inner Child, Gender Difference and Couple Relationships. Special Issues will be elaborated in Chapter III. The Shadow, the Inner Male and Inner Female, and Processes of Development, all of which can be related sources of conflict, stagnation and despair, can also be brought into awareness and explored to provide fertile ground for enrichment, growth, healing and hope.

The essentially systemic and transpersonal model will be developed in Chapter IV and elaborated through practical application in the form of a workbook for couples and couples therapists in Chapter V. In Chapter VI a summary of feedback elicited from couples therapists who have reviewed the workbook will provide qualitative data on its potential utility and effectiveness.

The meaning of the word systemic as applied to psychotherapy developed in the context of the growing field of Family Therapy over the past forty years as a way of differentiating the emerging focus on problematic interactional and communication patterns in family systems from the previously dominant psychoanalytic view of pathology and the route to healing as inherent within individuals. The term is used here in its more recent manifestation to refer to approaches that include attention to both intra- and inter-personal dimensions of

being and doing rather than over-emphasizing either one or the other in relation to cause or cure.

The adjunct approach to couples therapy developed in this dissertation is considered systemic because it embodies this integrative awareness of the need for change in both levels or "systems" of the troubled relationship - the outer or observable interactional experience of the partners - and their inner felt experience of self-in-relation. In addition, the word systemic also refers here to incorporation of awareness of the impact of larger social/political conditions on both the inter- and the intra-personal dimensions of the couple relationship as necessary to the consideration of problems and their solutions. In other words, the individual's intrapsychic system is embedded in an interpersonal system that is embedded in a social/political system - and all these dimensions must be able to be addressed by any theory that purports to be "systemic."

The word transpersonal refers to yet another dimension of human existence - the potential for experience of relatedness beyond self, other or environment to a sense of deep fundamental or spiritual connection with everyone and everything, the universe, the All. The theory presented here is considered transpersonal because it embraces the impact of this dimension of experience on relationship, as well as

possibilities for moving through committed couple relationship toward greater fulfillment of this potential. The practice of mindfulness is emphasized as a tool for achieving both expanded consciousness and an improved experience of relatedness on all levels.

Significance

... the way we structure the most fundamental of all human relations (without which our species could not go on) has a profound effect on every one of our institutions, on our values, and ... on the direction of our cultural evolution, particularly whether it will be peaceful or warlike.

-Riane Eisler, The Chalice and the Blade

It is hoped that the theory and practice presented here will at least contribute to the collective capacity to resolve relationship impasses and to assist the growth and development of healthy connection between intimate partners. It may also be possible through this study and its application to help men and women counter the effects of "Dominator" conditioning in themselves and their own relationships, and thereby add to the building momentum of the "Partnership Way."

Erich Fromm, quoted earlier in this Introduction extolling love as "the answer to the problem of human existence," went on to differentiate between "mature" and "symbiotic" forms. Symbiotic union he characterized as "fusion without integrity" - which seems to correspond to our modern understanding of a mutually "co-dependent

entanglement" (Hendricks and Hendricks) where participants sacrifice elements of the true self and unconsciously maintain their connection through dovetailing roles of submission and domination, fueled by the threat of separation and loss.

In mature love, on the other hand, one's individuality and integrity are preserved and "the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two." It is the real possibility of mature love that is hopefully fostered here. In part through exploratory differentiation - of aspects of the self and of gender conditioning - it is hoped that this adjunct to couples counseling will contribute to clearer, more accurate awareness in intimate partners - of themselves, of each other, and of their power to consciously engage in a process of collaboratively imagining and creating the relationship that will satisfy them both.

Their couple relationship might then evolve to manifest as a refuge where each partner can be seen and heard and known more fully than in any other human connection, as a source of challenge - to waken to and integrate the lost shadow-self, to commit to emergence from Dominator conditioning, to deepen the capacity for empathy with self and other - and as an inspiration to move toward fulfillment of higher potentials, including conscious partnership in all human (and non-human)

relations. As any two people grow toward these ideals, there is a ripple effect through all the layers of their social organization, from their own children and families-of-origin outward, and the collective chances of humanity for a peaceful evolution are improved.

It may also be that this dissertation points the way toward transpersonal possibilities that, when tapped, reveal the underlying oneness each individual, coupled or not, is embedded in. This is the source of all love - of self or other or of life itself. With attunement to this level of being, there is an experience of no boundaries or separation between people - and - no loss of integrity. The on-going journey to conscious or co-committed or mature love with another person - when differences within the self and between the partners are mindfully embraced - can yield this experience - for moments or more.

C H A P T E R I I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The goal of an adjunct integrative theory for couples therapy and its practical application in the form of a self-help workbook has required inquiry into three major areas of study: the Inner Child, gender difference, and couple relationships. An exhaustive examination of any one of these subjects is beyond the scope of a dissertation at this point in time because each has become the focus of intensified professional and popular interest in very recent years. Therefore, this review will consist of three sections addressing:

1/ major therapeutic conceptualizations of the Inner Child since the first known professional writings on the subject were published (1963), including those that contribute most to the author's approach

2/ key writings on the psychology of gender difference from the past decade which provide the psychological basis for therapeutic education of couples about Dominator and Partnership modes of relationship

3/ selected recent works directed to professionals and the public about improving couple relationships which:

- mention the concept of the Inner Child, or allude to the existence and influence of this subpersonality - or - at least embrace an

- awareness of the impact on adult interactions of emotional and behavioral patterns that originated in response to childhood caretakers
- allow for, if not explicitly claiming, a multi-leveled systemic frame of reference for examining and improving couple relationships - i.e., inclusive not only of extended family or intergenerational influences on current adult interaction, but also specifically of socio-political-cultural factors such as gender conditioning and institutionalized forms of oppression
 - give attention to affective and experiential, as well as cognitive, components of couples' needs
 - include awareness of the transpersonal dimensions of human development and the transformational potential of couples work.

The Inner Child

In recent years, the concept of the Inner Child has drawn the attention of large numbers of clinicians who have found its therapeutic application extremely effective with a wide variety of individuals. In addition, there has been a surge of popular enthusiasm for this framework for self-improvement and healing manifested in the form of self-help books, audio and video-tapes, and support/therapy

groups that have amounted to what has at times been called the Inner Child "movement."

The historical roots of this phenomenon reach far into primordial times. In the introduction to Reclaiming the Inner Child (1990), a collection of essays by major contributors to the subject, editor Jeremiah Abrams suggests that the idea of the child within was embodied in

... the very earliest forms of nature worship and solar religions ... (whose) child-gods gave way ... to the emergence of divine mythological children throughout the world ... (including) the Messiah concept of the Hebrews.

Charles Whitfield, M.D. in Healing the Child Within (1987) also concludes from his study of its evolution that this mythic element "has been part of our world culture for at least two thousand years." Carl Jung, introducing his essay on the Child Archetype (1940), refers to Kerenyi's research on "the mythology of the child or the child-god" as supportive of his own "overwhelming impression of the world-wide incidence and frequency of the the motif." (in DeLaszlo, 125) There is, then, evidence that this concept, in one form or another, has also contributed significantly to the process of meaning-making in human history.

Approaches to the Inner Child

There are probably many reasons for the long-standing and widespread appeal of the Inner Child. One likely explanation is that it literally embodies the integrated

younger self for whom feelings and needs, limitations and learning, hopes, dreams and higher potentials were experienced more immediately, directly and legitimately, even under harsh conditions. In other words, since these components of basic humanness were for most people more allowed during childhood, there can be a connection through the child-self with more of the openness, aliveness, wholeness and genuineness that are often missing from adult lives and sought through the healing process.

Another possibility is the unusual flexibility of the construct, which can be adapted to serve varied therapeutic purposes. There are five fairly distinct approaches to the conceptualization of the Inner Child in the literature reviewed:

- Inner Child as carrier of emotional wounds and adaptive originator of psychological defenses, i.e. the so-called "Wounded Child"

- Inner Child as the "natural," "true," "authentic," or "deeper" self, source of the greatest personal potential

- Inner Child as beyond all conditioning, source of the highest transpersonal potentials - the so-called "Divine" or "Wonder" Child

- Inner Children as separate related entities - one "wounded" and one "true" and/or "divine"

- Inner Child as a combination or continuum of these elements, embracing all through a transformative process

that allows the "higher" elements to emerge as "lower" ones are integrated.

Although all of these definitions are represented in this review, it is the last which will be incorporated theoretically in Chapter IV and practically applied in Chapter V.

~ ~ ~

Missildine. W. Hugh Missildine, M.D. seems to have been the first to devote a whole book to elaboration of the concept in Your Inner Child of the Past, published in 1963. A physician then child psychiatrist by training, Dr. Missildine found his Freudian theoretical background "too cumbersome and too removed from daily experience...to use effectively" with the many children and families who came to him for help in the years after World War II. His book is "an effort to provide, in understandable language, a working knowledge of the root causes of emotional disturbance and a method of dealing with them." (16-17) Growing directly out of his clinical involvement, and tested and refined through this application as well as through teaching at the university level, his conceptualization is focused on the effects of past experience on the present and the need to learn to parent the Inner Child in order to improve current functioning.

Part of what is valuable in Missildine's work is his emphasis on the role of the systematic social devaluation

of children in reinforcing a general lack of respect for the Inner Child. He points to "our traditional cultural view [of children] ... as derogatory, belittling and the basis for later self-contempt." (33-4) The common parental habit of not acknowledging the positive behaviors of children and readily criticizing the negative ones contributes greatly to the tendency in adults to be rejecting of any child-like behaviors or feelings in themselves. Childhood becomes too often associated with weakness, incapacity, ignorance and powerlessness, and any experience reminiscent of these unappealing qualities is to be avoided. Another assumption embedded in our culture is the idea that growing up means somehow leaving childhood and its attendant vulnerabilities behind once and for all. Missildine is particularly committed to correcting this mistaken notion which underlies our collective unawareness of the Inner Child.

The child we once were continues to exist in our adult selves and it is totally impossible to banish such feelings ... While you can make a serious and sincere effort to be responsible and mature, you cannot manage the feelings and actions of your "child of the past" by putting them away. They are part of you and must be accepted before you can give your attention to your mature goals. (35)

Missildine's Inner Child manifests in the presence of attitudes and behaviors (such as opinions, gestures, preferences, tendencies) unconsciously modeled after the parents while growing up, and especially, and most importantly, in the replication of parental attitudes

toward oneself. To a large extent, he claims, we seek situations that will recreate the (good and bad) feelings we had as children in relation to these parental attitudes in order to feel "at home."

Whatever its peculiarities, you gained from your family the feeling of being 'at home.' It is this feeling which your 'inner child of the past' constantly seeks. (40)

If we cannot find, recreate or simulate the emotional atmosphere we knew as children, we feel 'strange,' 'foreign,' 'lost' or 'not at home.' If we succeed in simulating it, we have the old familiar 'at home' feeling. It provides a certain kind of security, but it contains all the restrictions and hurts we knew as children. (48)

Missildine's Child of the Past can be a tyrant whose fears and defenses rule an adult and lead to patterns of self-defeating behavior in the effort to cope with its demands. Effective management of the Child Within is essential to emotional maturity and stability. The author suggests that the parenting of the child-part of the self automatically replicates the ways one was actually parented. For most people, this means that there are common tendencies to ignore, belittle, distort or overreact to the feeling awareness of the Inner Child. The response to emotionally charged information this subpersonality tries to convey is often similar to that of many parents in face of the unbridled intensity of their children: an effort to mollify, pacify, indulge, punish or otherwise suppress or control.

The route to emotional health, according to Dr. Missildine, is via development of a new relationship with the Child Within, that is, by becoming a better parent to one's self. The key to this change in attitude is the combination of total acceptance of the feelings of the Inner Child with firm limit-setting on behavior. The point is to fully acknowledge and appreciate the vivid and necessary presence of this subpersonality while not letting its reactivity interfere with adult judgment.

Missildine's focus in this guide to self-therapy is quite practical and somewhat evangelical. He seems truly concerned with the challenge of bringing his message to the (psychologically minded) masses via his simple, accessible writing and his offering of exercises for the recovery of the Inner Child of the Past. He lists questions and suggests the use of a notebook to record answers, encouraging as much self-directed inner work as possible before recommending a therapeutic relationship for assistance if the process seems too difficult or takes too long.

~ ~ ~

Transactional Analysis. Developed as a new group modality by Freudian analyst Eric Berne, M.D. in the 1950's and 60's, Transactional Analysis or "T.A." was introduced to the public through his well-known book Games People Play

(1964), and further popularized by psychiatrist Thomas Harris, M.D. in the best-selling I'm OK-You're OK (1967).

Berne's analysis of interpersonal communication transactions includes identification of three seemingly universal "ego states" of the individual. Each ego-state, he proposed, is a "coherent ... system of feelings accompanied by a related set of behavior patterns ... (including differences in) posture, viewpoint, voice, (and) vocabulary." (Berne, 23) He calls these fundamental mind-sets Parent, Adult and Child, and uses simple diagrams to illustrate the predominance of one or the other in each individual in a communication exchange.

...Berne says that 'Parent, Adult and Child are not concepts like Superego, Ego and Id ... but phenomenological realities.' The (ego) state is produced by the playback of recorded data of events in the past, involving real people, real times, real places, real decisions, and real feelings.

(Harris, 40)

The Parent-state involves recordings of the characteristic attitudes and behavior of parents or parent-substitutes witnessed during the first five years of life. The Child-state contains "tapes" of the inner experience of an individual from the same period, including emotional reactions to his or her parents. Current events in some way reminiscent of the past can trigger the automatic re-playing of original patterns of response from either the Parent or the Child - regardless of their appropriateness in the present.

The Adult-state, on the other hand, is described as "objective" "non-prejudicial" "data processing" and "autonomously directed." Beginning at around ten months of age, this information-gathering capacity mediates between the Parent and the Child and starts to develop powers of thought and discrimination, which contribute to the ability to choose appropriate actions and the possibility of overriding both Parent and Child tapes. The Adult-state is also supposed to be accessible to anyone, "including children, the mentally retarded and schizophrenics."

Each individual is always in one of these three states during any transaction - very often in the Parent or Child, and thus "in the same state of mind as one of your parents (or parent substitute) used to be ... (or reacting) the same as (you) would have ... when you were a very little boy or girl " Berne uses the word "contamination" for what happens when the Adult's present-time data-processing is interrupted by recordings of the Parent or the Child, and provides a virtual encyclopedia of colorfully named "games" to describe the varieties of contaminated communications that make up most of human social experience.

"Autonomy," the aim of Transactional Analysis, is defined as the achievement of "game-free relationships," which requires, he suggests, "obtaining a friendly divorce from one's parents (and from other Parental influences) so

that they may be agreeably visited on occasion, but are no longer dominant." (183) This differentiation will supposedly allow the Adult to stay in charge of most communication transactions.

"Complementary transactions", that is, between like parts such as Adult-Adult, Parent-Parent, Child-Child - or in which the difference is understood and accepted by both parties, as in Parent-Child/Child-Parent exchanges, generally make for good communication. "Crossed transactions," however, create trouble. "The most common crossed transaction, and the one which causes and always has caused most of the social difficulties in the world, whether in marriage, love, friendship, or work..." is when one person is supposedly speaking from his or her Adult and the other responds from either the Parent or the Child. (Berne, 30)

In his general formulation and in his emphasis on the wide-ranging common destructiveness of the crossed parent/child type of interaction, Berne expresses an understanding of the importance of his version of the Inner Child in adult relationships. Although he does not make the connection explicitly, except about intimacy, he does imply that the reclaiming of certain child-like potentials is also necessary to autonomous functioning.

The recovery of awareness, spontaneity and intimacy are the essential manifestations of this desired and rarely

realized goal. Feelings are prominently featured in relation to each of these capacities - the freedom to feel, to know what one is feeling, to choose to express feelings and to avoid games. On the subject of intimacy, Berne writes that it is "essentially a function of the ... spontaneous ... uncorrupted Child in all its naivete living in the here and now." But he also adds, with a note of resignation, that "usually the adaptation to Parental influences is what spoils (intimacy), and most unfortunately, this is almost a universal occurrence." (180-1)

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Jung. Psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung first published "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" in 1940. Although we might see certain similarities to other Inner Child theories in his description, his original essay immediately differentiates itself. Because "the archetype is always an image belonging to the whole human race and not merely to the individual," we cannot identify "the real child (as) the cause and pre-condition of the existence of the child motif." (Jung, in DeLaszlo, 135) The concrete experience of the person of the child is relevant but not entirely determining of his or her awareness of this version of the Inner Child. In other words, he suggests that we must keep in mind the symbolic nature of the archetypal Child, as well as the imprint of individual's specific childhood. The shared mythic aspects of the child within are at least

equal in significance to personal associations. For Jung, the "inner" dimension includes "the pre-conscious childhood aspect of the collective psyche."

The pre-conscious aspect of the collective psyche, or the "collective unconscious" is a very rich and ready source of ages-old images and channels for the imagination, rather like a collective psychic savings account - that is earned simply by virtue of membership in the human race, and from which one can draw at any time.

...The truth is that the (collective) unconscious is always there beforehand as a system of inherited psychic functioning handed down from primeval times."

(Jung, in Lauter and Rupprecht, 242)

Always there, always available, this dimension of consciousness provides an endless variety of mythic associations and shadowy dimensions to borrow from - usually unknowingly - in the effort to construe reality. Each person has a unique and indefinable access and orientation to these riches of the unconscious. Chief among them are what Jung called the "archetypes" - "'myth-forming' structural elements (of) the unconscious psyche" or "mythological components" - "primordial images" or "living psychic forces" or "motifs" - which emerge involuntarily into consciousness, and then influence current functioning.

The child motif represents not only something that existed in the distant past but also something that exists now; that is to say, it is not just a vestige but a system functioning in the present whose purpose

is to compensate or correct, in a meaningful manner, the inevitable one-sidedness and extravagances of the conscious mind. (Jung, in DeLaszlo, 136)

This particular archetype serves as a sort of safety net to prevent over-identification with the conscious contents of the adult mind. If some kind of psychic rigidity threatens to develop in an individual, the need or the option exists to let go and free fall back into the strongly woven web of the collective unconscious - where the Child archetype always awaits to restore psychic balance.

Since the differentiated consciousness of the civilized man has been granted an effective instrument for the practical realization of its contents through the dynamics of his will, there is all the more danger, the more he trains his will, of his getting lost in one-sidedness and deviating further and further from the laws and roots of his being ... Our differentiated consciousness is in continual danger of being uprooted; hence, it needs compensation through the still existing state of childhood. [my emphasis] (Jung, in DeLaszlo, 136-7)

Jung's emphasis seems to be on the restorative potential of the archetype or Inner Child for the human psyche.

Because of its connection to a primitive, instinctual consciousness, the Child offers a path back to a more natural, undifferentiated, less willful and better balanced state of being.

Students and followers of Jung have built on and elaborated his earlier conceptualization of the Inner Child. As Edith Sullwold, Ph.D., Jungian child therapist, said in her keynote address to the participants in the

conference Reawakening the Inner Child (Washington, D.C., November 20, 1987):

This archetypal image has as its universal function the task of seeing that our experiment with living remains fresh ... It represents spontaneity and the deep urge of the human soul to expand, to grow, and to explore vast and unlimited territories.

In another version of part of this speech for Many Hands: Resources for Personal and Social Transformation ("A Fresh Experiment: Listening to the Child Within," Summer 1988, pp.2, 35), Sullwold also describes the more familiar aspect of the wounded inner child. Drawing on the transpersonal dimension of the Jungian archetype can help to prevent passing woundedness on to the next generation.

One source that can give us ... courage ... is the divine aspect of the inner child that resides in us all. I use the word 'divine' in describing the inner child to distinguish it from the inner child which has been formed by memory or personal experience - the neglected, abused, unfed, unloved, over-disciplined, over-judged child, as well as the vulnerable and needful aspects of the child we once were. This is the child which we all desire to heal, not only so that we can reclaim the energy for adult action that still reacts to the patterns of defense and protection we developed in response to the early painful experiences, but so that we do not unconsciously continue the patterns with the 'fresh experiments' that are our children.

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Whitfield. Charles Whitfield, M.D., developed his ideas about the Inner Child from within his field of chemical dependency recovery. In Healing the Child Within (1987), he proposes two parts to the self which are experienced in inverse proportion to each other: the "Child Within" and

the "Co-dependent Self". A list of names he considers to be interchangeable with the Child Within reveals some of the comprehensive nature of Whitfield's concept: Real Self, True Self, Authentic Self, Higher Self, Deepest Self, Inner Core, Inner Child and Divine Child.

He describes this aspect of the self as "the part of us that is ultimately alive, energetic, creative and fulfilled" "who we are when we feel most authentic, genuine or spirited" "spontaneous, expansive, loving, giving and communicating" "expressive, assertive" "vulnerable, open, trusting" "healthily self-indulgent" "(aware) of our Oneness with others and with the universe" and "real". This Child Within simply exists as an available part of the self throughout life, its resources limited only by the pull of its defensive rival, the Co-dependent Self.

The Co-dependent Self - also False Self, Unauthentic Self, Public Self, Impaired or Defensive Self - is "inhibited, contracted, fearful" "continually selfish and withholding" "envious, critical, idealized, blaming, shaming and perfectionistic" and "over-conforming". Its bad habits include that it "hides or denies feelings" "gives love only conditionally" and "is often either inappropriately aggressive and/or passive". This "false" self is called "Co-dependent" because of how it evolves out of the child's almost inevitable enmeshment with parents

who are addictively "dependent" either on the use of a chemical substance or some other dysfunctional behavior pattern. Co-dependent is a term that grew out of addictions counseling to refer to those whose preoccupation with the addict parallels the addict's preoccupation with the substance and is so intensely involving that he or she systematically sacrifices contact with the True Self or Inner Child.

Whitfield strongly emphasizes the role of shaming by parents or caretakers in creation of the False Self and alienation from the Child Within. "We hear (the shaming messages) so often, and from people on whom we are so dependent and to whom we are so vulnerable, that we believe them. And so we incorporate and internalize them into our very being." (Whitfield, paraphrasing Canfield (1985), 46)

This process of internalization of shame leads also to the "Critical Parent" aspect of the Co-dependent Self, which Whitfield does not develop, except to mention its existence. In fact, he vaguely claims that it is up to some unnamed nurturing aspect of the Child Within to provide for its own unmet needs. He addresses the reader as "you" throughout this book and the subsequent companion workbook, A Gift to Myself (1990), which maps out his recommended strategies and tools for healing the Inner Child, without ever defining what part of the self might be in charge of this campaign.

He also refers to the critical importance of another part of the self, explored and discussed by Arthur Deikman in The Observing Self (1982), which he defines as "that part of us that is watching both our False self and our True Self" ... and is "the core experience of the Child Within." He suggests this witnessing capacity may be "located somewhere in the Higher Self of the Child Within" - and agrees with Deikman that it lends a "transcendent element" to our consciousness. He also hints at the importance of the relationship between the development of the Observing Self, the healing of the Inner Child and the realization of transpersonal potentials.

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Grove. David Grove's approach to healing the Wounded Inner Child focuses on the therapist/client relationship and on changing and refining the therapist's communications with the client. His central emphasis is on the application of the Inner Child concept in the treatment of adults suffering from the debilitating effects of childhood trauma. The key to symptom relief lies in the therapist's ability to access the Child Within through carefully structured inquiry that elicits the Child's unique metaphors for their stored pain. Committed to avoiding the possibility of re-traumatizing the client by evoking overwhelming feelings from the past in therapy sessions, he manages to bring people back to and through and beyond the

moment of trauma without needing catharsis or any other particular emotional event in order to allow healing and change to occur. His gift seems to be an ear for precision with language that joins and carefully follows the Inner Child, conveying a safety that allows a long-protected vulnerability to emerge.

Presenting his ideas internationally in the form of workshops, audio and videotapes and workbooks, he proposes a circumscribed definition of the Child Within as a part of the self that came into being "to prevent the event" (of trauma). He writes that the Child Within is "a fragment of a child's persona in which traumatic learning is stored and which remains 'frozen' at a moment in time just before a traumatic experience." (Grove, Healing the Wounded Child Within, 5) He calls this moment "T - 1" (T minus One) and suggests that at this point in time the child responds to the impending trauma with defensive posture (usually one of dissociation) that ensures short-term psychic survival and, almost inevitably, creates long-term symptomatology.

The Child Within effectively stops time to prevent the trauma from happening, and thus, for this fragment of the self, the trauma never does occur. In this way the child is protected from the potentially overwhelming effects of the trauma at the same time as she or he stores the memory of it in the body. This somatic memory is ultimately manifested in physical and emotional symptoms

which are the Inner Child's attempts to communicate to the adult (and to the therapist) about what needs to be healed.

Grove states: "When you are wounded as a child, you need to be healed as a child." (Notes from workshops, "Healing the Wounded Child Within, March 31 & May 11-12, 1989) In order to reach the Wounded Child, the therapist must work in the past. In order to access the past, it is necessary, Grove believes, to communicate as much as possible in the language of the child, i.e., primary process language or the language of metaphor. The therapist must be able to discover the Inner Child's own metaphors for their stuckness in order to help transform those metaphors and thus move through the impasse.

The metaphors of the Wounded Child are not the metaphors of the adult. They are not universal or archetypal. They "belong to the client at a very specific time of their life ... and have custody over (parts of the body and mind)." (Notes from workshop, May 11, 1989) In order to access these metaphors and empower the client to reclaim body and mind, Grove finds it necessary to regress the client using trance-induction, which is stimulated by what he calls "clean language."

Clean language avoids many of the usual strategies therapists use to create safety for the Inner Child to emerge. Instead of encouraging relaxation and providing emotional or physical reassurance of the guide's presence,

the guide or therapist changes to a less direct stance and voice, becomes softer and less clear and precise with words at the same time as he or she attempts to carefully match questions to the focus of attention of the Inner Child.

"To get information on the metaphors, your words must be absorbed through the pores in the skin ... not through the ears and the head and down to the body ..." because then the adult rather than the Child Within is engaged. (Notes from workshop, May 11, 1989)

Grove differentiates three components of what he calls "Child Withinformation" - the internalized experience of trauma which is stored as an enmeshed mass of thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories. Another of the therapist's tasks, according to Grove, is first to separate this information stored in the Child from the information stored in the adult, and then to distinguish three kinds of Child content: feelings - stored as metaphor within the body, sensations - stored as information about the body, and memories - stored as information external to the body.

The act of separating these elements is intended to counter the original moment just prior to trauma (T - 1) when the child, unable to distinguish internal feelings from the body or the external environment, absorbed responsibility for what was happening to them along with chaotic unprocessed, undifferentiated data about the experience. Breaking down this information mass begins to

make the data available to processing and reevaluation, and implicitly challenges the self-blame. It is first necessary to help clients to differentiate their bodies from the environment to create the possibility that they did not do the trauma to themselves. By responding in specific ways to receive and encourage and differentiate each part - feelings, sensations and memories - the therapist communicates openness and welcome to all aspects of the Wounded Inner Child who can then speak in whatever voice is possible.

Clean language gives the Child Within greater permission to emerge by joining the client's mode of expression and specifically structuring questions to match the information given. Grove puts special emphasis on the Inner Child's need to control certain aspects of the therapy process. The message is continually conveyed to the Child Within that they are in charge of the flow of the content and the boundaries of the interaction. This message and its realization are critically important to successful work with the Wounded Child Within in order to prevent re-traumatization by well-meaning therapists who in their zeal to heal impose their meanings and metaphors on all-too-receptive clients. Conventional approaches to eliciting the Inner Child are criticized for language that actually connects with the Adult about the Child in ways that may win compliance from the Adult but send the Inner

Child into hiding. A central emphasis of Grove's work is the importance of following the client, and especially the Child Within, who will, if allowed, lead the therapist to precisely where attention is most needed and healing is most possible.

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Bradshaw. John Bradshaw has a Master's degree in psychology and studied seriously to become a Catholic priest (until he was thrown out of seminary the day before his scheduled ordination for alcohol-fueled rebellious behavior), but his true calling seems to be as the popular guru of Inner Child work. Through television appearances, workshops, audio and videocassettes and self-help books, especially Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child (1990), Bradshaw spreads his message of hope and healing with the passion and conviction of an evangelical preacher. He is a man with a mission going directly to "the people" and offering his gift of tools for recovery of the self that, if used, he believes, can "begin a process of lasting transformation." (xii) His appeal is widespread, and he has earned his following with the relevance, simplicity and aliveness of his approach, and by his personal openness.

Drawing on his life in a dysfunctional family, reflections on his reactivity to his upbringing and his struggles to find his path, his religious training, his

experience of recovery from alcoholism and co-dependency partly through Twelve Step Programs, other therapeutic modes that helped him to heal and grow, as well as the theory and practice of varied thinkers and therapists, he has synthesized and created a clear and straightforward approach to the Inner Children which is easily accessible and useful both for self-therapy and as part of formal helping relationships.

He defines the "Wounded" and "Wonder"(-ful) Inner Children by giving many examples of how they manifest and by sharing his own and others' stories. Emphasizing the "sense of I AMness" at the core of the true self (or Wonder Child within), he describes the many ways in which parents with unmet dependency needs cripple or fail to foster this quality in their children and inflict "toxic shame," which is the central and most powerfully debilitating emotion of the Wounded Child. He describes the Wounded Child within the adult succinctly as "a 200 pound 3-year-old."

Enumerating the conflicts and issues characteristic of "adult children" of dysfunctional families whose lives are "contaminated" because of originally unmet dependency needs, he contrasts the natural qualities of children when their emotional needs have been met. For instance, co-dependence is a key characteristic of the Wounded Child who has adapted to on-going parental distress by learning to ignore his or her own inner signals about feelings, needs

and desires. On the other hand is healthy dependence that allows a child to be sheltered and guided during early development, to experience the legitimacy of their own needs, to generate self awareness and self esteem, and to learn to form appropriate attachments and commitments throughout life. (8-9, 34)

Bradshaw offers a developmental framework for self-assessment of the extent of one's woundedness and to help in determining which dependency needs were not met. He bases his map on the work of Erik Erikson with additional help from others, including Pamela Levin, who "gives powerful workshops in reparenting for both laypeople and professionals." (288) He combines Erikson's stages of human development and definition of tasks appropriate to each step with Levin's conceptualization of thirteen year cycles of the reworking of childhood needs to show how the early stages either do or don't provide the fundamental "sense of I AMness" needed for healthy adulthood.

Using this framework, he provides for each stage of childhood development a set of questions about current feelings, attitudes and behavior as a means to identify forms and degrees of woundedness. Then he offers specific recommendations for work that can be done to begin to reclaim the wounded infant, toddler, pre-schooler, and school-age or adolescent self, either on one's own, with a partner or in a group. These include writing exercises,

affirmations and meditations, and frequent urgings to experience feelings directly and to share this process with at least one support person.

"Championing" the Inner Child is the equivalent of developing new parenting skills and a habitual attitude of more consistent attention, nurturance and discipline. Bradshaw offers concrete suggestions for new rules to improve the relationship with the Inner Child and steps to release him or her from the bondage to old dysfunctional roles. And again, he offers exercises geared to each developmental phase to help "to correct the learning deficits of the past." Included among these, for example, is values clarification - in order to encourage the school-age Inner Child to acknowledge and express beliefs that have been submerged for survival's sake. Part of this process also is finding people who can actually offer some appropriate additional mothering and fathering to the Inner Child, that is people who will provide some of the attention and nurturance as well as the kinds of confrontation that help a child or an adult to grow. Another important aspect of this essential shift in relationship to the Inner Child is to practice self-protection through setting clearer personal boundaries and learning to effectively confront others who threaten to ignore or invade them.

One of the strengths of Bradshaw's approach is his development of the concept of the Wonder Child. He relates to the archetypal dimension easily as "a representation of the cumulative and collective experience of mankind, a universal potential in every human being ... (a) congenital psychic predisposition derived from inherited patterns created in past generations." (252-3) He explains that archetypes contain both positive and negative aspects, and in the case of the Child archetype, embraces all qualities of both the Wounded and Wonder parts. He suggests a necessary and complementary relationship between the two - that the Wounded Child is that which ultimately directs our attention to the Wonder Child.

This Wonder Child is the Authentic Self who knows a person's true feelings and needs, and who emerges as the Wounded Child begins to be healed. This is the underlying part of consciousness that never lost the sense of I AMness, however great the suffering or co-dependent adaptation. This is the Essential Self or Soul which contained the potential and the vision and the motivation for healing when the Adapted Self or Ego was too preoccupied with surviving to consider higher possibilities.

The liberation of this Wonder Child is the crowning victory of the campaign to heal the wounded Inner Child. Bradshaw is clear and unequivocal about his belief in the

essential spiritual nature of humanity and the incomparable value of contacting this potential. The Wonder Child is the spiritual connection, the source of the deepest sense of I AMness and child-like qualities of spontaneity, joy, trust, hope, love and wonder. Access to the Wonder Child is the key to intuition, creativity and self-actualization, according to Bradshaw. This access depends entirely on a willingness to know and accept and learn to love - "to reclaim and champion" - the wounded, vulnerable and needy aspects of the child within.

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Psychosynthesis. Psychosynthesis was developed by Roberto Assagioli, a colleague of Freud, Jung and Maslow, and continues to be further elaborated and refined by its practitioners. Molly Young Brown, in The Unfolding Self (1983) quotes Assagioli on the central purpose of Psychosynthesis as "the harmonization and integration into one functioning whole of all the qualities and functions of the individual." (7) A large proportion of this sort of practice is focused on the integration of so-called "subpersonalities."

Subpersonalities are defined as "constellations of behavior, feeling and thought which are left over from a time when they were needed for survival...." (18) There is an endless number of possible constellations for any individual, some of which may have archetypal qualities, but most of which represent already realized qualities or

attitudes or potentially emergent new ones. At any given time, a person is likely to be over-identified with some subpersonalities and under-identified with others, making certain aspects of the personality dominant and others under-developed or unavailable. Both over and under identification are manifestations of unconsciousness and contribute to emotional reactivity.

A goal of Psychosynthesis therapy is to deepen the client's awareness of these subpersonalities and his or her relationship to them in order to expand the possibilities for conscious choice and to access the Will. Another aim is to strengthen identification with the Observing Self or Witness, a part of the self which can hold all the other parts without judgment, listen to their voices without prejudice, empathize with their feelings, hear their higher purpose, and balance their needs. The Witness is also the connection to the so-called Higher Self or spiritual source. Through disidentification with the subpersonalities and strengthening the Witness or Center, access is gained to inner wisdom and to the higher human potentials.

Disidentification is usually accomplished by amplifying the identification through exploring the nature of a subpersonality from many different angles. When the qualities, perceptions, attitudes, tendencies, importances, feelings and needs of a part of the self are given

permission for verbal and non-verbal expression, brought more fully into consciousness and related to the compassionate Center, it is possible and likely to experience not only greater self-awareness, but increased self-acceptance and enhanced self-love. Once the subpersonality is better known, there is also the possibility of choosing the extent to which it is allowed to influence behavior, especially since its ways of manipulating for attention, nurturance, control or invisibility have been brought out into the open. Subpersonalities have been likened to children who are less difficult, more manageable and more enriching to be around when they are truly seen, heard and appreciated.

An approach to the Inner Child as a subpersonality is detailed in an unpublished master's thesis by Ken Manning entitled: Discovering, Exploring and Healing the Inner Child through Psychosynthesis (1985). He draws on his experience with the Inner Child Workshop developed and led by Judith Abbott and Claire Boskin. Abbott and Boskin based some of their ideas about what conditions would elicit the Inner Child on the successful healing work of the Kaufmans with their autistic son, described in Son-Rise by Barry Kaufman (1987). Key to this husband and wife team's success in radically transforming the child's functioning in less than a year, according to Manning, was their commitment to participate in his world in whatever

ways they could and to communicate to him that "he was OK wherever he was." (Manning, 100) This attitude may also be key to reaching any child, including the inner one, whether within the self, in a one-to-one therapy relationship or in the context of a group.

Abbott and Boskin studied the Kaufmanns' work in order to develop their own list of elements that would potentially contribute to a healing environment for a child. They came up with the following components, which were incorporated into their Inner Child workshop as part of the preparation for guiding visualization of an "Inner Healing Environment" into which the Inner Child would be invited:

Physical components: light, order, warmth, softness, adequate time, a sense of rhythmic movement, water, boundaries, sound (often music), being alone or with a loving person or animal; humor, safety

Interpersonal components:

- 1/the child needs to be seen, heard, touched
- 2/the child's reality needs to be respected
- 3/the child is received as he is without judgment or criticism
- 4/there is room to express his individuality
- 5/there is a sense of order and continuity
- 6/the child is allowed to express independence, grieving acceptance and forgiveness
- 7/there is safety

(Manning, 101)

The visualization/creation of the healing environment is an act in itself of invitation to the Inner Child that has symbolic value. This effort sends a message to the Inner Child that someone (some part of the self) cares and knows and respects his or her needs enough to

visualize a safe and welcoming space. This is clearly the act of a care-taker or parent subpersonality whom the Inner Child probably needs to learn to trust. Repetition of this visualization will help to strengthen the constellation of the Nurturant Parent where it is underdeveloped, thus enhancing the capacity to re-parent the Inner Child.

Another important element in contacting the Inner Child, Manning suggests with Boskin and Abbott, is for the client (as well as the therapist) to maintain identification with the Observing Self so that the Child is free to choose his or her terms of response to the invitation to appear. Because the Inner Child's emergence is likely to elicit the voices of other subpersonalities, for example, that of the Inner Critical Parent, the requirement of "safety" is at least partly met by a commitment not to be pulled into over-identification with any of the conflicting subpersonalities. Although the Observing Self is not the same as the Nurturant Parent, the practice of listening from this witness position helps to constellate a more compassionate and centered parental subpersonality. In addition, the Critical Parent will also be heard by the Witness sooner or later, and, as with all subpersonalities no matter how rigid they've become, its hard edges may just begin to soften as a response to its feelings and needs being truly considered.

Psychosynthesis, by virtue of its openness to all parts of the self, both the light and the dark, its permission for verbal and non-verbal expression, its emphasis on the necessity for safety and reinforcement of the existence of the Observing Self, offers a standing invitation to the vulnerable Inner Child. In addition, its spacious conceptualization of the self includes a clear awareness of the spiritual dimension and of the connection between developing the Observer or Witness or Center, promoting harmony among all the parts, and the possibility of realizing the higher potentials.

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Voice Dialogue. Hal Stone, Ph.D. and Sidra Winkelman, Ph.D. state explicitly in the introduction to Embracing Our Selves: The Voice Dialogue Manual (1989) that they are not proposing a new form of therapy. Rather, they are presenting a process that "can be integrated into any theoretical approach or any way of working with issues of personal growth ... a tool for communication and for the exploration of consciousness" (ix) They suggest that each personality is composed of many selves, subpersonalities or energy patterns, which begin to develop very early on when

the infant learns that he or she must establish some measure of control over the environment to avoid unpleasantness ... we learn that some behaviors please and some displease those in our environment. Thus we develop a consciousness that pays attention to those environmental cues.

(14, 87)

And thus the first subpersonality to emerge is what they call the Protector/Controller, whose primary job is to figure out what behaviors will win responses that satisfy basic needs and serve to protect vulnerability.

The Protector/Controller is considered a Primary Self, if not the Primary Self, in that it is generally the oldest subpersonality and the one with whom the individual is most closely identified. Without a part of the self whose top priority is survival of the organism, life might be very short. Before any other subpersonalities can be identified and explored, this "Boss" part must be contacted and convinced that the intentions of all are trustworthy and that its centrally important role will be respected. Other primary selves, called the "Heavyweights," are like powerful assistants to the Boss, often including the Pusher, Perfectionist, Power-Broker, Pleaser or the universal Critic - all of whom serve as body-guards to ensure that the Protector/Controller stays in charge and the Inner Child stays safely out of sight.

The Inner Child in the Voice Dialogue Process is the composite of the vulnerable selves, which are also described as "playful" and "magical." The vulnerable child self "is tuned in energetically - it is aware of everything that is happening" "is exquisitely sensitive and reacts immediately to any abandonment it perceives" "can often tell us who is to be trusted and who is not" "is often

preverbal and may sit quietly or cry ... " and "has invariably been hurt in the past and is fearful of being hurt again." Yet this part is also considered the source of our capacity for deep intimacy. (151-2) The Playful and Magical children seem to be a team that lights up a life with joy, fun, fantasy, intuition and creativity - and challenges to some extent the rule of the Heavyweights. However, these subpersonalities can also function defensively when needed to cover up and protect the Inner Child's vulnerability.

Vulnerable selves or powerful selves can be disowned, depending on where the strongest identification is, and either way the results can be dangerous to the personality. Because the Protector/Controller usually has the ego's allegiance, the vulnerable selves are more likely to disappear from view.

Perhaps the most universally disowned self in our civilized world is the vulnerable child. Yet this child may be our most precious subpersonality, the one closest to our essence, the one that enables us to become truly intimate, to fully experience others, and to love. Unfortunately, it usually disappears by the age of five. This child cannot exist in our civilized societies without the protection of a very strong protector/controller. The only way a protector/controller can handle the vulnerable child is to disown it. (151)

The implications of this statement for intimate relationships, or for most forms of human connectedness after the age of five, are particularly grim. On the other hand, certain people have so completely identified

with the Inner Child in one or more of its trusting or spontaneous manifestations that they seem to have disowned the Protector/Controller to such an extent that they are often victimized.

Subpersonalities or selves are also called "energy patterns" in this system, and when a part is disowned, its energy is pent up and seeks release - which it will find in some form sooner or later. The body is one place where the disowned part may manifest, making an impact through physical symptoms that carry their message in code. Another convenient outlet is projection of the disowned part onto someone else so that there is a certain intense emotional charge around whatever it is that we see in the other that we are determined not to recognize in ourselves.

If this process goes on too long, the disowned energies can turn "demonic" and potentially overwhelming to the Protector/Controller. Only the intervention of the Aware Ego can lead to reclaiming and taming these destructive energies in order to then draw on their resources. To be able to do this, the Ego must separate from all the selves and attempt to embrace them without judgment. It is the Aware Ego that has the potential to become a competent parent to the Inner Child by bringing both the vulnerable and the powerful selves into the light and into a balanced relationship with each other. This is the definition of true empowerment in Voice Dialogue work -

when "our aware ego honors, and to some extent embraces, both power and, ironically enough, vulnerability." (166)

Orientation to the Inner Child

The conceptualization of the Inner Child rendered by Hal Stone and Sidra Winkelman provides many of the elements that are integral to this author's theoretical understanding and practical application of the concept of the Inner Child.

- 1/ A definition of the Inner Child that includes wounded, natural and divine or transpersonal aspects. There are tremendous personal and transpersonal resources in children which are too often sacrificed in their process of personality development. (Armstrong, Bradshaw, Coles, Farmer, Vissell, Whitfield, Wickes) Some of this loss may be necessary for social conditioning, although the question of how much has not been answered satisfactorily. In any case, these resources reside as living potentials in the Inner Child, and may be recovered, at least in part, through Inner Child work, while retaining and actually strengthening necessary capacities for social regulation.
- 2/ A concept of subpersonalities that includes their energetic dimension. Parts of the self have undeniable energies of different qualities that can be experienced in interacting with them. These differences are observable

through changes in voice tone and pacing, posture, facial expression and attitude. Also, a part denied does dam up energy and find a way to overflow eventually to make its presence felt and known, often through the body. This reliable dynamic is part of the inner wisdom or wholistic self-correcting capacity of human nature, a dimension that is beginning to be explored more fully scientifically. The developing field of psychoneuroimmunology, which studies connections between the mind and emotions and the body's ability to fight off or heal itself of disease, has much to contribute to the understanding of these phenomena. Joan Borysenko, Ph.D., cellular biologist, psychotherapist, meditation instructor and co-founder of the Mind/Body Clinic at New England Deaconess Hospital, wrote about the effects of disowning the wounded Inner Child in Guilt Is the Teacher, Love Is the Lesson (1990):

Unfortunately, it takes physiological energy as well as mental energy to deny, to inhibit the pain that yearns for comforting ... (and) when that bound-up emotional energy interacts with an underlying physical weakness, disease can result. (77)

3/ A concept of subpersonalities that organizes them and recognizes the central importance of the Inner Child as well as the part that protects the Child by disowning it. Most, though not all, Inner Child theories highlight this fundamental inner conflict, but the Voice Dialogue process emphasizes it and makes it more concrete. Also, by naming the Protector/Controller part as a kind of umbrella

subpersonality for the demanding and manipulative (what some would call "false") selves and by explaining the beneficial and necessary functions of these parts, the groundwork is laid for its integration by an attitude of acceptance and appreciation.

4/ An emphasis on the phenomenon of disowning of parts of the self, especially the vulnerable Inner Child, depositing of these disowned parts in the Shadow and projecting the Shadow onto others. This learned pattern of response to feelings that were considered undesirable or inconvenient by parents or caretakers seems to be a source of the inner and outer conflict that is reinforced by year after year of unconscious repetition. Bringing awareness to these tendencies can begin a process of integration and healing of the inner split, as well as giving hope for the possibility of more harmonious relationships.

5/ A self-system that includes the Aware Ego - or Witness or Center or Observing Self - as a part of the self that is beyond the inner battle and capable of holding and hearing all the other parts. The liberation of the Observing Self, the uncovering of this innate capacity for witnessing oneself from a fair and empathic point of view is an important aspect of mindfulness meditation training, and is often one goal of many forms of psychotherapy. This is a proven route to increasing self-knowledge and to potential self-acceptance, and the passage can be greatly

accelerated by a willingness to witness the Inner Child. In addition, the Inner Parent, or the capacity for nurturant and effective parenting of inner (or outer) children is intertwined with the ability to stay "centered" or in the Observer position of non-judging openness to what is. Without the Aware Ego, there would likely be no one to invite the Child to speak or to truly hear what he or she has to say - except the parental part that was shaped by the childhood experience of being parented and tends too often toward conditioned emotional reactivity.

6/ Inclusion of the idea that all the parts (except the Aware Ego) have both positive and negative aspects that need to be acknowledged and owned. For example, the idea that the Inner Critic can be serving a protective function - or - that the Inner Child might be overly demanding and need limits - helps to prevent idealization or over-identification with any part, as well as reinforcing the Aware Ego.

In this author's conceptualization, the Inner Child represents above all else the capacity for direct immediate experiencing, for knowing in an uncomplicated and undivided way, what one's primary feeling experience is from moment to moment. This is an innate ability which suffers and diminishes as will and skill evolve to control and direct experience in order to master the developmental challenges of life. The first of these tasks is to please caretakers

in order to get basic needs met and ensure survival. In the terms of Transactional Analysis, the initial communication transactions, like all that follow, are specifically directed to getting the "strokes" or "fundamental units of social interaction ... (from) intimate physical contact ... (to) the merest nod of recognition" that will essentially "keep our spinal cords from shriveling up." (Berne, 14-15)

In other words, there seems to be very good reason for learning to begin to deny one part of the self in order to honor another. With all that has been written in recent years about inadequate parenting and dysfunctional family systems as the source of the loss of the Inner Child, it might be well to consider the wealth of a much older philosophical and literary legacy about the divided self as an indication that the phenomenon may just be inherent in the human condition. In John Bradshaw's case, for instance, a large part of what called him back to his Inner Child, whom he had abandoned in the search for God and a secure direction for his chaotic life when he entered the Catholic seminary, was a developing awareness, through the writings of Nietzsche, of his loss of the Dionysian element. In his pursuit of the strengths and virtues of Apollo, "the god of form and structured discipline," he had sacrificed the aliveness of Dionysus, "the wild, creative energy of the Wonder Child." (Bradshaw, 275)

There may be a natural dialectical process in our relationship with the Inner Child that has something to do with two complementary tendencies in human nature. On one hand, a movement toward form, control, and a shaping of the self in order to preserve and extend the self in time and space; the other a tendency simply to be in relationship with and come to know what is without acting to change it.

There seem to be many strands of this polarity woven into the mass rejection of the Inner Child. All of the elements on both sides of this continuum of human qualities are important to development and to the potential for individual and collective self-realization. However, the opposition between them has become extremely unequal. The effort to reclaim the Inner Child is, at its most fundamental level, an individual and collective effort to restore balance to human existence by emphasizing the necessity for greater self-knowledge and attunement in relationship with the self before the next phase of controlling, structuring and extending leads to extreme "one-sidedness" and possible self-destruction.

Contacting the Inner Child

There are many approaches to contacting and re-engaging the Inner Child. Recognizing and becoming acquainted with various manifestations of the Inner Child can become an all-involving and very time-consuming pursuit

- in and out of formal therapy. Therapists probably do best to try out methods to determine what actually works for themselves to identify and enter into relationship with their own inner children before trying them with clients based on any other criteria. The Inner Child is very responsive to sincere, heartfelt invitation, but easily senses manipulation or the slightest hint of force which suggests unsafety. Without having embraced one's own vulnerability to a certain extent, lacking a good trusting relationship with one's own Inner Child, the application of the most brilliant technique to elicit a client's Child Within is unlikely to succeed.

Missildine's questions for recovery of "your Inner Child of the Past" predictably emphasize identification of childhood experiences, including parental attitudes, that may have left their mark. Berne, of course, would recommend analyzing current "games" in order to better understand transactions between the Parent and Child ego states. Jungians recommend paying attention to dreams, looking particularly for themes of abandonment. (Hillman, in Abrams, Reclaiming the Inner Child, 81)

There is also a well-known story about Carl Jung himself, from his autobiography, Memories, Dreams and Reflections (1961), telling of when he responded to a series of dreams that left him extremely unsettled by seeking some understanding through searching his childhood

memories - in vain. His resolution to "do whatever occurs to me" seems to have been made in desperation, but resulted in a temporary passion for building a village with stones - as he had done at the age of ten or eleven - and the ultimate realization that "if I wanted to establish contact with that period, I had no choice but to return to it and take up once more that child's life with his childish games." Playing childhood games, especially familiar ones, as Jung discovered, can be a direct route to the Inner Child, and to otherwise obscure inner truth.

Whitfield, along with others, including Bruce Davis in The Magical Child within You, would look to their compulsive behaviors for clues about the Inner Child's existence.

If I want to find the most naked moments which hold some truth over my being, I need to look no further than my moments of being out of control. The compulsive or desperate moments controlling my experience are where I have given up my freedom and set limits to my being. Just beneath my compulsive rituals or addictive behavior I find myself, my child most naked. (33)

Psychosynthesis practitioners might guide a visualization of an Inner Healing Environment embodying all the qualities that represent safety to a particular client in order to welcome the presence of the Inner Child subpersonality. Stone and Winkelman use their Voice Dialogue process to slowly draw out the Inner Child after first engaging the Protector/Controller.

Psychoneuroimmunology pioneer Joan Borysenko offers a guided meditation for "Restoring Bridges to the Inner Child," as well as providing an exercise for "Visiting the Inner Child on a Regular Basis." (Guilt Is the Teacher, Love Is the Lesson, 72-5) Barry and Janae Weinhold in their chapter on "Healing Your Inner Child," in Breaking Free of the Co-Dependency Trap, recommend recalling your earliest childhood memory or a recurring childhood dream and writing it out in great detail using all the senses, or drawing a picture of it to uncover the "important lesson, pattern or principle embedded in (it) that is still trying to happen in your life." They also suggest "Mirror Work" - repeating self-loving statements while standing or sitting in front of a mirror. (172-3)

In Healing Your Aloneness: Finding Love and Wholeness through Your Inner Child, Erika Chopich and Margaret Paul urge dialoguing between the Inner Child and the "Loving Adult" every day, either by writing or through Gestalt therapy-style use of chairs. Photographs are placed separately to represent the different parts of the self and to facilitate connecting with the feelings of each. If photographs are not possible, a doll or stuffed animal might serve to symbolize the child within. Bradshaw provides a wealth of questionnaires, inventories and exercises related to assessing degrees of woundedness and healing possibilities at each stage of child development.

He also offers a "Meditation on Creative Childhood Memories" as an adventure for the intuition and the pure pleasure of it.

Anyone wanting to develop a better relationship with the Inner Child might also benefit from:

- Putting childhood photographs in a special place or places where they will be seen daily as reminders to check in with the Child Within about how he or she is feeling right now or in response to any emotionally charged event
- Using such a photograph or another image as an object of meditation, focusing attention upon it and noticing the flow of feelings as they arise and fall
- Repeating affirmations - validating sentences that may or may not have ever been communicated to you when you were a child, which have some emotional charge to them - as you may have always longed to hear them

(Geared to different stages of child development, specifically focused affirmations are incorporated into workshops for adult children of alcoholics to recover the Inner Child by Rokelle Lerner. Her list was taken from Self-Esteem: A Family Affair by Jean Illsley Clark. Bradshaw includes a similar listing for each developmental stage (in Homecoming) which he credits to Pamela Levin.)

- The approach of Lucia Cappachione (The Power of Your Other Hand and Recovery of Your Inner Child) using the non-dominant hand to write or draw for the Inner Child

This last technique may well be the psychic expressway to the Inner Child. In fact, experiential methods seem to have greater potential to elicit the younger self because the child is generally more readily available through play rather than talk alone. Because a child is closer to his or her immediate experiencing, most

adults can more easily contact the child part of themselves through activities that don't require speech. Although the written dialogue approach necessitates the use of words, it also involves an element of playfulness and engages the body in a way that allows greater safety and easier access to the feelings of the Child.

The effort to connect with the Inner Child can be threatening; many people are afraid of doing it wrong, or of not being able to do it at all. They may not even know why they resist the effort. But upon picking up a pencil or a crayon in the non-dominant hand, they become like a child again. The effort to do something new and unfamiliar quickly re-produces an old mixed childhood sense of awkward limitation and fresh possibility. The weaker, more vulnerable side is expressed by the less competent hand - and voice changes with the penmanship. When drawing with the non-dominant hand, there is no need to worry about doing a "good" job. It is expected that the product will be funny-looking, and can be attempted in a spirit of play, with welcome relief, since accessing that very child-likeness is the cherished therapeutic goal.

The Body, the Emotions and the Inner Child

"The only way she could attract my attention was through an illness that forced me to go within and listen to her needs," Lucia Cappacione writes in Recovery of Your Inner Child. Unfortunately, this is often the case, that

slowing down and turning inward do not seem to be realistic possibilities until one has to look for solutions to some painful riddle or crisis of the body. When one is out of touch with one's body, it is likely that one is also alienated from the Inner Child.

Our sensuality - the deep experience of touch, taste, smell and hearing - belong to the Child. Children are sensual people. They experience life through their senses, and with their whole bodies ... This is who we become whenever we connect with our Inner Child. (Chopich and Paul, 12)

This capacity is linked with the child's natural meditative state in which attention is focused in an undivided way on the experience of the moment and there is far less cognitive interference with the input from the senses. There is a world of difference between this experience of the body from within and the objectifying attitude of the typical adult who ordinarily identifies with his or her mind, and ruthlessly uses the body to accomplish its ends.

There is often a price to pay for the unwillingness to embrace the vulnerable child-self. The body can shake the mind awake to this loss of contact with its wisdom - if its messages can get through habitual defenses and disconnection. Arnold Mindell, Ph.D., (who with Amy Mindell has developed Process-Oriented Psychotherapy), writes of expressions of the integrated wholeness of the human being through what he calls the "Dreaming Body" or, simply, the "Dreambody." It may be instructive to

substitute "Inner Child" for the word "Dreambody" in the following quotation from Working with the Dreaming Body.

It is fascinating for me to see again and again how illness asks for integration, how it requires consciousness by creating pain ... The less aware you are of your dreambody, or the longer you avoid making changes in your nature that your dreambody is asking of you, the more insistent your dreambody becomes. It is a self-amplifying system and continues stubbornly until the moment when you get seriously ill and are forced to heed its message ... (69-70)

The Jungian analyst, Marion Woodman, drives this point home by making the connection between suffering in the body and denial of the Inner Child even more explicit.

Many people can listen to their cat more intelligently than they can listen to their own despised body. Because they attend to their pet in a cherishing way, it returns their love. Their body, however, may have to let out an earth-shattering scream in order to be heard at all ... It is possible that the scream that comes from the forsaken body, the scream that manifests in a symptom, is the cry of the soul that can find no other way to be heard. If we have lived behind a mask all our lives, sooner or later - if we are lucky - that mask will be smashed. Then we will have to look in our mirror at our own reality. Perhaps we will be appalled. Perhaps we will look into the terrified eyes of our own tiny child, that child who has never known love and who now beseeches us to respond ... (in Abrams, 100)

"Many men and women are trapped in lives of quiet desperation until they turn to help that child within," continues Woodman. People come into therapy in some kind of psychic pain. They always ostensibly want relief; often they also express a desire for some understanding of how they have ended up in pain. But rare is the person who sits across from the therapist and says with sincerity:

"I really want to know how I am drawing this painful experience to me. It may be even more painful for me for a while to learn this, but I want to honor my Inner Child by making the effort to hear its message embodied in my feelings. I trust this pain to lead me to what needs to be corrected in my own attitude and behavior ... " Many people may sense this level of inner calling, but don't fully attune to it and therefore can't articulate it - yet this is really why they've found the motivation to seek help. Something in them - which might be the voice of the Inner Child - is leading them to rediscover and reclaim this lost awareness and thereby to heal and grow beyond old limitations and thus fulfill more of their purpose and potential.

The self-actualizing need in human nature can be camouflaged in those who have no apparent interest in "personal growth" beyond immediate problem solving - and might seem obscure in some who present themselves and their struggles in a convoluted manner that appears to resist as much as it reaches for healing. It may be more difficult to imagine, for instance, that those whose symptoms fit the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic criteria for personality disorders are also expressing a longing for reunion with the Inner Child - but Chopich and Paul have suggested just this.

Our experience with clients suffering from personality disorders is that their root is a deep and consistent disconnection between the Inner Adult and the Inner Child ... Because the disconnection is so profound, healing takes much longer than it does for those people whose Adult and Child connect in some areas. In many people the Adult abandons the Child only when certain issues are activated, but personality disorders represent an across-the-board disconnection, which is why these people have such a hard time in both their work and their relationships ... (In) eating disorders ... this Child, frightened of being controlled by others because of the severe abandonment by the (Inner) Adult, chooses to control in an area where no one else can have control ... Panic attacks (a common symptom of anxiety disorders) occur when the Inner Child encounters a situation that triggers its feelings of intense fear or aloneness and has no (Inner) Adult to nurture, support and handle the situation ... or when the Inner Child feels trapped into betraying itself to avoid rejection or in a situation where it believes it can't safely get out. (154-59)

The above interpretation of certain psychopathologies in terms of the relationship with the Inner Child is offered to illustrate the possibility that emotional health in general may be largely dependent upon this inner dynamic. The abandonment of the Child Within, however partial, always involves the disowning of the capacity for full emotional experience and awareness. This rejection of feelings - of vulnerability, woundedness, anger or fear, for example - is a denial of important parts of the self, which are not then eliminated. Instead they enter the unconscious and actually become more, rather than less, powerful.

There is general agreement among the theorists reviewed that the disowning of the Inner Child and its

associated feelings is a, if not the, major cause of individual emotional distress and self-alienation. The dominance of the personality by Whitfield's False or Co-Dependent Self, Grove's frozen traumatic learning, Bradshaw's Wounded Inner Child, the over- or under-identified subpersonalities of Psychosynthesis, and the demonically powerful or victim-self of Voice Dialogue - persists unless there is a reclaiming of Child Within.

Mindfulness and the Inner Child

The recovery of the child-like capacity for the full emotional awareness of the Inner Child requires a commitment to paying closer attention to what one is experiencing moment by moment. Very much in western post-industrial, post-nuclear, post-modern culture leads in the opposite and usual direction of compulsively reacting to experience without ever really knowing what it is. If the Inner Child symbolizes the potential for direct aware experiencing and feeling, then the influences to ignore, devalue, abandon or hide this part of the self are legion. Through endless messages from the advertising media and the entertainment industry, there is pervasive conditioning to deny, suppress, medicate or escape feelings through any number of addictive behaviors. Acting out of feelings - as long as it is done with style and drama - even if it leads to harm to the self or others or legal conviction for

wrongdoing - is glamorized, not only in movies, but by too much of what appears on the evening news. The alternative - learning to slow down and look inside, learning to encounter and embrace and accept one's own vulnerability, learning to deal with other human beings with awareness of their vulnerability - is given little public emphasis and all too rarely is a focus of private family values.

In all fairness, there has also been a trend in recent years, or a movement, with gathering momentum for - of all things - sitting still. This is the "Age of Aquarius" - or of the "Aquarian conspiracy" which is a time of emerging energies of integration and inner knowing, a time of deepening rather than extending, a time of exploration of the spiritual dimension. It may also be, as Jean Houston, psychologist, teacher and director of the Foundation for Mind Research, wrote in 1980, a time ...

in which we find a tragic split that can be resolved only by a new order of reality ... (and there is) the necessity of a new spring and a new vision of what it means to be human ... as man, ripped by urban sprawl and technological prostheses from his biorhythmic roots in nature, loses those primordial moorings which tied him to the moral flow of the universe

(It) is a world that no longer works ... and which no longer provides us with the means and reference points by which we can understand ourselves.

... there are many signs that we are finally moving out of the reign of quantity, out of the objectifying, manipulating philosophy and psychology of power that has reigned too long.

(Houston, Life-Force: The Psycho-Historical Recovery of the Self)

In the past decade, the concept of the Inner Child, and the call for its reclamation, have arisen. This is in part a call for integration of the wholeness, inner harmony and connectedness natural to young children when they are still able to directly experience, feel and know their reality.

Another emerging trend in this period has been a significant wave of interest in Eastern forms of meditation. Of the various approaches available in the United States, this author has had the most experience with Vipassana, or Insight training and practice. The basic meditation instructions encourage an attitude of open non-reactive receptivity to experiencing that reflects elements of the major psychological change needed to recover and restore the Inner Child to consciousness.

Simply observe the sensations ... and the associated feelings as they arise, without clinging or condemning or identifying with them ... Begin the sitting being aware of either the rising-falling of the abdomen, or the in-out of the breath. Then as sensations become predominant in the body, give full attention, full mindfulness to them. It is important to keep a relaxed mind in observing the sensations, especially when there are strong painful feelings. There is a tendency for the mind and body to tense in reaction to pain. This is an expression of aversion, dislike, avoidance, and creates an unbalanced state of mind; relax behind the pain and observe the flow. When the mind is silent, relaxed and attentive, pain is experienced not as a solid mass but as a flow, arising and vanishing moment to moment ... Whenever sensations in the body are predominant, make them objects of meditation. When they are no longer predominant, return to the breath. When you find yourself tensing because of pain, carefully examine the quality of unpleasantness, the quality of painfulness. Become mindful of that feeling and the mind will naturally come to a state of balance. [my emphasis] (Goldstein, 17-18)

This lengthy passage is included because it so well illustrates the important shift in attitude which is both a route to and a result of work with the Inner Child. This is the balancing of a fundamental "doing" orientation to life with one of "being." This is not to imply that a child only is. A child fills most every waking hour with all kinds of doing that are related to learning and growing, and to extending itself into its rapidly expanding world. But the quality of the young child's doing is, unlike the typical adult's, infused with being, with its own direct, uncomplicated, aware, immediate feeling experience. Until the child learns differently, as he or she inevitably will, he or she essentially trusts the emotions as they arise, being with them - in effect - as "objects of meditation," until one feeling passes, and onto the next.

If a baby is frustrated (and all babies are frustrated many times every day in the course of the usual handling) he will discharge the frustration and get it out of his system if he is allowed to do so. If someone will really listen [my emphasis], he will ... make violent physical movements and angry noises, and will perspire from a warm skin. This is exactly what he needs to do.

If the person present with him will hear him out, fully and with attention (undoing and removing the source of the offense first, if possible), he will go on yelling and flailing and perspiring for a long time. It will seem even longer to an embarrassed parent, particularly if it happens in public. If he is allowed to do so freely, however, and is not again frustrated in the effort to quiet him, he will come to the end of this discharge also and will emerge a relaxed, happy and co-operative child.

(Jackins, The Human Side of Human Beings, 81)

The baby does not interrupt his experiencing of feelings or sensations to ask why he is having them or to explore potentially endless associations or to react in some convoluted way. He merely has the feeling and lets it move through him, lets it affect him, discharges it simply, and lets it go. It is simply another experiential event like every other bit of pleasantness or unpleasantness that marches through his day. It comes, and it goes - providing there is someone in his environment who is willing to listen and let him have his feeling and not interrupt the experience until it is finished - at least some of the time.

The child is practicing mindfulness all the time; that is his primary job - to PAY ATTENTION to what he is feeling and sensing and to have the full experiencing, moment by moment, in order to learn and grow.

The child is naturally in meditation until the biological rhythm of meditation is destroyed in the child. The child naturally is in union with the self.

(Joseph Chilton Pearce, article in Mothering magazine, Spring 1985, 24)

The key to maintaining this state of union, as Harvey Jackins, founder of Re-evaluation Counseling, points out above, is to have a caring and non-intrusive witness who gives attention and, thereby, permission and validation for his feelings, which then take their natural course, leaving the child free to move on to the next experience with uncluttered awareness and unfettered energy.

An example of this phenomenon came from an observation of a family interaction in a public setting. A small child of about two years was getting fussy and irritable in its stroller, as the family sat waiting for one member to return from the rest room in order to go on with their tour. His mother seemed to be absent, but another older woman made a comment about how he had missed his much needed nap, and, as he began to shift from sputtering to howling, passed a hard candy to the person closest to the child to give to him as a pacifier. This woman declined the offer, saying "I don't think it's good to give kids sugar when they're upset. Maybe he just needs to cry and get it out of his system." Whereupon, she put her hand gently on his shoulder and looked into his face and encouraged him to just "let it out," repeating to him "maybe you just need to cry, and that's fine with me." The child did just that, seeming to find comfort in this, soon petered out and sat contentedly, falling asleep shortly afterwards.

At least part of why it is necessary to "reclaim" the capacity for feeling as adults is because this kind of witnessing was usually not available in the formative years. Lessons are absorbed early on, like the one this child almost took in had he been "successfully pacified" with the candy, that it is better when you're uncomfortable to eat sugar than to feel what you're feeling and cry. An

important part of the process of healing the Inner Child is to challenge this conditioning by beginning to give ourselves and our feelings the aware, interested, caring and non-reactive attention we missed.

If I have a feeling of anger, how would I meditate on that? How would I deal with it ... as an intelligent person? I would not look upon anger as something foreign to me that I have to fight, to have surgery in order to remove it. I know that anger is me, and I am anger. Non-duality, not two ... Because anger is me, I have to tend my anger as I would tend a younger brother or sister, with love, with care ... In Buddhism we do not consider anger, hatred, greed as enemies we have to fight, to destroy, to annihilate. If we annihilate anger, we annihilate ourselves. Dealing with anger that way would be like transforming yourself into a battlefield, a tearing yourself into parts ... If you struggle in that way, you do violence to yourself. If you cannot be compassionate to yourself, you will not be able to be compassionate to others.

(Thich Nhat H nh, Being Peace, 40)

Sitting with one's feelings in a relaxed attentive way is embracing the Inner Child. It is treating feelings with the kind of acceptance and love one might hope to show a little child who needed comfort. It is also becoming like a child, naturally in meditation, in union with the self.

This, then is the essence of the process of recovery of the Inner Child, a conscious effort to become mindful - aware, accepting and non-judgmental - of the on-going flow of feeling and sensing experience. Although meditation training, at least in the Vipassana school, embodies this emphasis in theory and in spirit, in reality, it is easy to lose track of this value even in the pursuit of it. On one hand, there is not a lot of individual guidance ordinarily

until a great deal of progress has already been made toward better concentration and more continuous mindfulness. And on the other hand, there is the ever-tempting familiar mode of "doing" which can be readily applied to any human activity, even including "being"! To counter this well-known tendency of the human mind to over-do, Buddhism provides the wisdom of "The Middle Way" as well as one of the steps on the "Noble Eightfold Path" to enlightenment - "Right Effort."

The Middle Way refers to "seeking a healthy and useful discipline without either extreme of complete indulgence of the senses or self-torture." (Fadiman and Frager, Personality and Personal Growth, 441) Right Effort echoes a similar meaning:

It is said in the Abhidharma, the Buddhist psychology, that effort is the root of all achievement, the foundation of all attainment. If we want to get to the top of the mountain and just sit at the bottom thinking about it, it's not going to happen. It is through the effort, the actual climbing of the mountain, the taking of one step after another, that the summit is reached ... But effort has to be balanced. Being very tense and anxious is a great hindrance. Energy has to be balanced with tranquillity. It is as if you are trying to tune the strings on a guitar. If they are too tight or too loose, the sound is not right. In our practice also, we have to be persistent and persevering but with a relaxed and balanced mind, making the effort without forcing.

(Goldstein, The Experience of Insight, 12-13)

The key to finding this Middle Way in the process of reclamation of the Inner Child, as in everything, is through the practice of mindfulness or the willingness and

commitment to pay attention to what is happening inwardly as well as outwardly. In this sense, the process is the desired product.

"Meditation training ... is a door into direct experiences of wholeness," writes Jon Kabat-Zinn in Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness (1990). Zinn is the founder and director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, which is becoming internationally known for its successful application of mindfulness meditation training to the problems of chronic pain and stress in medical patients.

When we glimpse our own completeness in the stillness of any moment ... a new and profound coming to terms with our problems and our suffering begins to take place ... (a) transformation of view ... a perceptual shift away from fragmentation and isolation toward wholeness and connectedness ... from feeling out of control and beyond help (helpless and pessimistic) to a sense of the possible, a sense of acceptance and inner peace and control. Healing always involves an attitudinal and emotional transformation. Sometimes, but not always, it is accompanied by a major reduction in physical symptoms and by improvement in a person's physical condition. (168)

Engagement in re-connecting and building a nurturing relationship with the Inner Child requires and results in the kind of learning described here. Glimpses of the wholeness, connectedness and vital presence of child-like experiencing are not only possible, but predictable by-products of this healing process.

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Gender Difference

Writers on couple relationships who embrace a transpersonal psychological orientation have tended until quite recently to give little attention to gender differences, perhaps in favor of a more evolved awareness of men and women as "beings" rather than as biologically limited social animals. Their examinations of the effects on love and intimacy of innate or conditioned masculinity and femininity have occurred primarily from a Jungian perspective, which has too often accepted culture-bound mythic or archetypal definitions as universal while ignoring the systems dimensions of sexual politics.

The field of Family Therapy has also been subject to gender-blindness, as described by Marianne Walters in the Prologue to The Invisible Web: Gender Patterns in Family Relationships:

The family as a social system is gender-based. It exists to structure the relations and organize the social lives of the two sexes that inhabit the planet; to accomplish in an orderly fashion the functions of procreation, protecting and rearing the young, and assuring social continuity between the generations. Of course, it also has an economic base, which is also gender-based. If men were to be free to explore, or to make discoveries, they needed someone to manage the households in which they would reside with their offspring, and to tend to the daily necessities of life. So how could it be that family therapists were not deeply conscious of gender socialization? How could the field have ignored sex-role stereotyping in family formation? ... No context could be more pertinent to the understanding of all family systems than that of gender. There is no "neutral" context within which human systems exist.

It took Walters and other female family therapists about ten years to develop this critique and to deal with the controversy surrounding their efforts. At this point in the evolution of Family Systems theory and practice, their work has begun to be integrated.

Greatly assisting in this progress have been the prodigious writings of the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College, which have evolved into an increasingly coherent theory of women's (and more recently men's) development of self-in-relation that emphasizes the necessity to attend to differences in gender orientation to relationship - including important dimensions of couple or family interaction such as the elements of mutuality and empathy.

In addition, from the field of sociolinguistics, Deborah Tannen's best-selling volume You Just Don't Understand (1990) proclaims:

Much as I understand and am in sympathy with those who wish there were no differences between women and men - only reparable social injustice - my research, others' research and my own and others' experience tell me it simply isn't so. There are gender differences in ways of speaking, and we need to identify and understand them. Without such understanding, we are doomed to blame others or ourselves -or the relationship - for the otherwise mystifying and damaging effects of our contrasting conversational styles. (17)

In our efforts to help couple relationships to survive and to thrive, the illuminating arena of gender difference has much to contribute.

How does sexist social and psychological conditioning - which overvalues men and masculinity and devalues women and femininity - distort and limit the possibilities for intimate connection between human beings? This is a profoundly important question that can readily arise in the course of studying and practicing psychotherapy - if one is aware of the existence of sexism or male bias in the culture at large and in the social sciences in particular. Denial or minimization of this dimension of life of course renders the question meaningless, or at best, merely hypothetical. To embrace the issue sincerely, however, requires attention to the work of specifically feminist clinicians and researchers who have already devoted years to seriously seeking an understanding that transcends the limits of our given social and psychological consciousness. This review will focus primarily on some of the important relevant and largely feminist literature that has emerged in recent years from the still relatively new field of the psychology of women.

Miller

In Toward A New Psychology of Women (1976), psychoanalyst Jean Baker Miller's voice embodies the directness and honesty she believes women have long been denied, particularly in dialogue with men. Specific deleterious effects of sexist conditioning on women and men

and relationships are presented in a clear and straightforward manner that does not attempt to cushion or qualify her condemnation of gender inequality. Violating the tradition she criticizes of female emotional protectiveness toward males, this author openly challenges women to dare to speak up and men to strengthen themselves to allow more real conflict to emerge for the furtherance of individual and collective growth and authenticity. She also asserts that these shifts are necessary for the preservation of the human species which has relied too long on the disempowerment of women to empower men.

To educate readers about the institutionalized power dynamics between the sexes, Miller contrasts two types of inequality: temporary - as in parent/child or student/teacher relationships where the goal of the arrangement is eventually to eliminate the imbalance - and permanent - as in those relationships in which power is determined by birth and is never intended to be transferred from the dominant to the subordinate. She places women in sexist society in the latter category in relation to men and suggests that "mutually enhancing interaction is not probable among unequals."

Miller points out that from the beginning of life human beings require exposure to and conflict with difference in order to grow, underlining the obvious necessary differences between self and environment, child

and parent, that promote development. But under conditions of permanent inequality such as sexism, she notes, open conflict with the dominants is suppressed to preserve the status quo to the great detriment of both groups and resulting in significant sacrifice of human potential.

Miller specifically refers to how subordinates under these conditions, or women under sexism, are necessarily focused on learning what will please the dominants, in this case men, because it is through developing the traits, attitudes and behaviors that please and serve the interests of the powerful that they will receive the most validation and benefit. Women, the subordinates, fundamentally attuned for the sake of self-preservation to the preferences of the dominants, are thus likely to know them and their feelings, needs and wants better than they know their own. This habitual other-orientation can also restrict the self-awareness of subordinates in relation to potentials that might challenge prevailing (sexist) norms. Their personal development is additionally limited by the tendency of society to define inclinations or aspirations that might lead to their greater empowerment as deviant, which in fact they are if the conditions of permanent inequality are to be maintained.

Miller's analysis includes the speculation that psychoanalytic theory had to be invented in order to deal with "crucial realms of human experience ... deeper issues

related to feelings of vulnerability, weakness, helplessness, dependency, and the basic emotional connections between the individual and other people." (22) Although she suggests that men might have had to learn systematically to deny and avoid embracing these parts of themselves to cultivate their capacity for managing a threatening physical environment, it is clear that this evolution also served to protect and further the illusion of their right to dominance - of other human beings as well as nature. Like other messy or inconvenient aspects of life that might somehow by association undermine the assumptions supporting men's position of power over women, these elements of the human experience were relegated to the subordinates under the rubric of inherent weaknesses and further devalued.

Under sexism, Miller emphasizes, men are cut off from self-knowledge in relation to these devalued qualities, (which then become part of their own and sexist society's collective shadow) whereas women, having learned to observe and study men in order to survive the system of permanent inequality, can generally see them more accurately. Women learn to keep this knowledge to themselves, however, because one of the rules of permanent inequality is that subordinates do not respond with directness and honesty to the dominants, but rather make a habit of protecting them from the reality of their

deficiencies and the impact of these on the less powerful. This covert tendency extends to the various types of soothing, support and even problem-solving that men often need from women, but require in a camouflaged form that allows them to avoid both acknowledging their need and appreciating what is given.

Miller emphasizes that the need to connect with and serve others is central to women's sense of self, but more of a luxury if a need at all for men whose overriding requirement is to achieve manhood through supposedly independent doing. She points out that theories of so-called "human nature" have been formed by "the dominant culture," which has interpreted and defined the world for everyone while systematically ignoring the experience of subordinates, including women. Calling for new definitions of such concepts as "power" "autonomy" and "self-determination" that integrate women's relational values and ways of being, she suggests that qualities and characteristics disowned by men and projected onto women as "weaknesses" are actually strengths needed in all people as the basis for collective survival.

Gilligan

Harvard School of Education Professor Carol Gilligan challenges the male bias of reigning theories of personality development in A Different Voice (1982).

Beginning with Freud's judgment that women's irreconcilably different process of development equalled developmental failure, she questions the inevitable distortions of psychological research and theory which claim universality while leaving out or essentially giving up on half the human race. In Piaget's work she finds the observation that children differ by gender in attitudes toward rules and procedures for determining fairness in their games. Somehow this difference - boys' fascination with the legalistic aspect of play and girls' more flexible, pragmatic, relationally oriented approach has been translated into another assumption of female deficiency.

In the developmental theory of Erik Erikson, Gilligan finds that his analysis includes a major sex difference at adolescence which is somehow eliminated from his sequence of stages. Although men are thought to consolidate a sense of self before tackling the challenges of intimacy, women, Erikson noticed, seem to create identity through the experience of intimate relationship so that the two tasks are intertwined and therefore delayed. Ultimately, however, the male version of developmental progression prevails and dictates the tasks of Erikson's fifth stage as well as determining the direction of most of the other stages: growth by increasing separation and autonomy rather than through relatedness. In spite of important contradictory evidence, here another crucial

dimension of human experience is described to the scientific community and the world with certainty of its significance. The problem is that the theoretical map simply disregards apparent variations in half of the human terrain and then is based on this incomplete survey of the territory.

Gilligan begins her critique of Kohlberg's stages of moral development by noting their basis in a twenty year study that included no females yet claimed universality for its conclusions. She points out that women are generally evaluated through this conceptualization as stuck at the third of six stages and thereby assumed to be deficient because of a supposedly naive interpersonal orientation to morality. In her study of women struggling with a decision about abortion, her subjects were commonly torn between feelings of "responsibility" and "selfishness" in relation to the life of the fetus, their lovers or husbands and families, their own lives and the larger world. Although usually alone in the decision making, women tended to be aware of the possible impact of their choices on a whole web of relationships, which did not allow for a singular or merely principled approach to the task.

Out of this study emerged an analysis of sequential development in women of an "ethic of care" - involving an initial focus on survival that is then complicated by feelings of being too "selfish" and then shifts to another

orientation that at first excludes the self in a stereotypically idealistic self-sacrificing maternal attitude. When the woman's thinking changes and grows to re-include the self as one of the ones deserving consideration, upheaval follows until her value of care can be redefined as a balancing of concern for relationships with others and with the self in a context of mutual interdependency.

Using Kohlberg's design for studying moral conflict and choice as part of her own research with children, she added female subjects and found that their responses were constricted by his questions alone. Children, she discovered through more intensive interviewing, tended to frame the same situation very differently - and brought two very different generally gender-dependent types of reasoning to their attempts to resolve the moral dilemma. (This is the so called "Heinz" problem of whether a man should steal an expensive drug for his wife who will die without it when all efforts to gather the money have failed to collect more than half the cost and the pharmacist has refused him access without the full fee.)

Boys frequently confronted the problem with a focus on competing individual rights, logic, principles and rules of fairness, whereas girls usually demonstrated an ethic of care and concern with the fulfillment of responsibility in a context of particular relationships, emphasizing

possibilities that involved communication, helpfulness and the least amount of suffering for all involved. These differences tended to hold across the class and age spectra throughout Gilligan's research, with "(male voices speaking) of the role of separation as it defines and empowers the self, (and female voices) of the ongoing process of attachment that creates and sustains the human community." (156) Gilligan emphasizes her interest, not in establishing a competing hierarchical conceptualization of difference, but in "the interplay of these voices within each sex" and their potential complementarity in "the dialectic of human development."

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg and Tarule

Beginning with concerns and questions about women's common experience of self-doubt in relation to their intellectual competence and authority and a strong sense of the male bias of most of the content and method of formal education, four feminist psychologist/professors developed and administered intensive in-depth interviews of women which led to the writing of Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind (1986). In their "acknowledgments" of assistance with the book that grew out of their research, the authors Belenky (University of Vermont), Clinchy (Wellesley College), Goldberger (New York University), and Tarule (Lesley College Graduate School)

give major credit to Carol Gilligan and William Perry of Harvard for inspiring them and providing "bold new constructions of human development" on which their work is based.

Early in the volume they refer to Gilligan's later extension of her study (with colleague Nona Lyons - 1983) to the area of identity development, demonstrating that moral orientation relates to whether self-definition is in terms of separation or connectedness. Some of Gilligan's (and Kohlberg's) standard questions were integrated into a more extensive and open interview format which also included inquiries about gender, relationships and education. Although they focused exclusively on women and chose to avoid using most of the relevant male-originated conceptualizations, they did draw on William Perry's 1970 study of the intellectual and ethical development of male college students. Following his framework of "epistemological positions" and his phenomenological approach to interviewing, they focused on uncovering and elaborating particularly female modes of learning, knowing, valuing and conceiving the self with the primary goal of hearing women's "unheard and unimagined reality."

Most of the book is devoted to describing the seven "ways of knowing" the authors have conceptualized based on their research with women from a wide range of academic settings - from elite liberal arts institutions to inner

city community or alternative colleges - in addition to some who were receiving support for their parenting from human service agencies. Beginning with a state of passive dependent listening to others and no real voice of one's own, often reflecting acceptance of "extreme sex role stereotypes" and here summed up simply as "Silence," there is a developmental progression to "Received" then "Subjective" then "Procedural" Knowledge.

Received Knowers are "literal" and "intolerant of ambiguity," "do not evaluate ideas, (but) collect facts (and) do not develop opinions." They may be very good at taking in and retaining information, but not at the internal processing that would allow them to then relate the learning to themselves or even to other academic areas. Their thinking tends to be "black and white" and they rely on external authority to determine right and wrong - therefore their sense of self is based on this belief that "all knowledge originates outside the self." Because of their strong need for social approval as the measure of their worth, Received Knowers give others tremendous power to decide who they should and should not be. Unlike the Silent women who "see themselves as slated to lose ... (in) a stacked game" and have "little confidence in their meaning making and meaning sharing abilities," Received Knowers, also "selfless" and essentially "voiceless," do

believe in their abilities to listen and to please, and to "learn" from others what is truth.

Subjective Knowing might also be called intuitive or "gut" knowing. This "seeming move toward greater autonomy" involves turning away from others and toward the self as the source of authority about experience. Contrary to other developmental theorists, Belenky et al found from their research that this shift is not age-related, but is instead associated in some way with "failed male authority." The combination of "a crisis of trust in male authority" and some kind of "confirmatory experience that they, too, could know something for sure" provided the opportunity for women to leap into trusting themselves and others like them, rather than those over them.

Two types of Subjectivist Knowing are described: one in which a dualistic stance still predominates but dictates the self as the knower of one's own absolute truth - and - the other referred to as "the quest for self" where the certainty of her own authority propels a woman into assertive action. "Distrust(ing) logic, analysis, abstraction, even language itself... (as) methods belonging to men," there is also a general rejection of authority and an alienation from science - aspects of "an anti-rationalist attitude" that might somewhat resemble sex-role stereotypical femininity, if it were not for an equally strong aversion to external influence.

Truth, for subjective knowers, is ... something experienced, not thought out, something felt rather than actively pursued or constructed. These women do not see themselves as part of the process, as constructors of truth, but as conduits through which truth emerges. The criterion for truth they most often refer to is "satisfaction" or "what feels comfortable to me...."(69)

It is in the subjectivist "quest for self" that women are "actively and obsessively preoccupied with a choice between ... acting on behalf of the self as opposed to denying the self and living for and through others." Recognizing the validity of multiple points of view, the emphasis remains on the need to take responsibility for living according to one's own truth. Many times a decision is made that results in drastic change in the orientation to a network of relationships that once were a central source of personal support and meaning. As the previously dominant relational values are challenged, old ties are broken and new directions forged, women often end up floundering for a secure sense of self, while insisting on an independence (or counterdependence) that can lead to isolation.

It is in the position of Procedural Knowing that women open themselves to the idea that "careful observation and analysis" are required in addition to feeling and sensing in order to truly know. In other words, they again open themselves to learning from others, but this time with a very different purpose in mind - the acquisition of

expertise that will contribute to their power to know for themselves and to communicate their truth to others effectively.

Now, they argue that intuitions may deceive; that gut reactions can be irresponsible and no one's gut feeling is infallible; that some truths are truer than others; that they can know things they have never seen or touched; that truth can be shared; and that expertise can be respected. (93)

Procedural Knowledge involves two different approaches to making meaning, referred to here as Separate and Connected Knowing. These two modes of learning have to do with the experience of self as knower and the relationship (based either in attachment or separation) between the learner and the material of interest. Separate Knowers conceive of themselves as "essentially autonomous," and use "disinterested" or "impersonal" reason to evaluate and master "the object" of their curiosity. Connected Knowers, on the other hand, experience themselves as "essentially in relationship" - valuing "acceptance" rather than judgment, and "intimacy and equality between self and object" in their orientation toward understanding rather than mastery.

Separate Knowers are also "toughminded" and "adversarial," attempting to "exclude all feelings" and systematically playing "the doubting game" as if to challenge an author or idea to reveal its strength. Connected Knowers use empathy to "feel with" the experience of a writer and thereby "gain access" to his or her

meaning, as if patiently trusting the validity of the other's perspective for that particular self, and systematically playing "the believing game" to allow it to emerge. Although it is easy to hear a sex-role stereotypical polarity emerging again here, the authors insist that neither of these attitudes is confined to one gender, while admitting that Separated Knowing may predominate among men and that "many women take naturally to Connected Knowing."

It is not until the capacity for Constructivism evolves, however, that women can move beyond the dichotomy of Separate vs. Connected procedures for Knowing. A bout of so-called "selfish" leave-taking of established relationships and institutional allegiances is often required for the transition to a deeper involvement of self in the learning process.

Procedural knowers feel like chameleons; they cannot help but take on the color of any structure they inhabit. In order to assume their own true colors, they must detach themselves...(and) begin to put more faith in unjustifiable intuitions than they once did. But they do not abandon reason. They are aware that reason is necessary, but they know, too, that it is insufficient (129)

Constructivism begins as "an effort to reclaim the self" in relation to systems the self has merged with in order to absorb their procedural modes of learning. Seeking an integration of intuitive or feeling or "subjective" knowing with so-called "objective" knowledge, Separate and Connected Knowers use different words to

describe their goal: respectively, "the pattern" and "the logic" of the self - or - the "lost parts" and the "feel of it." Self examination is characteristic of this transition, sometimes in search of aspects of the self that have been "weeded out" through formal education and "may be experienced as fragmented and contradictory."

At this point in the process of developing a sense of self as knower and a voice to express one's knowing, women experience the liberating and empowering awareness that knowledge itself is theory and that theory is always the map, not the actual territory. In the words of the authors: "answers to all questions vary depending on the context in which they are asked and on the frame of reference of the person doing the asking." (138) This way of seeing and valuing the role of the learner in the construction of truth increases involvement and excitement in learning. It transforms Connected into Passionate Knowing, "a way of weaving passions and intellectual life into some recognizable whole," an approach in which the self is the major "instrument of understanding." Through empathic attunement, "attentive love," "intimacy" or "communion" with whatever they are studying, Passionate Constructivist Knowers may achieve the deepest level of awareness of a subject's unique meanings.

The "careful listening" that informs active, interactive passionate constructivism is also directed

toward the self and contributes to a voice that can "hold its own" in debate if necessary, while flourishing in "real talk" where "domination is absent, (and) reciprocity and cooperation are prominent." (146) The authors point out that arrival at this empowered position does not necessarily make life easier for women, because of the difficulty in the still sexist society of "finding companionable and supportive men" who will welcome their new hard-won voice.

The Stone Center

For the past ten years a group of experienced clinicians associated with the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College has collaboratively produced a series of papers describing important new thinking about women's psychological development which builds on the theories of Miller, Gilligan and Belenky et al. These "Works in Progress" have been refined, elaborated and furthered through the process of sharing them with others via the Stone Center Colloquia series, as well as in workshops given to groups of helping professionals and the general public. Published individually and available directly from the Stone Center for many years, selected articles have recently been gathered in the form of a book, Women's Growth in Connection (1991).

The first Director of the Stone Center, Jean Baker Miller, provided inspiration and foundational theory in her earlier work cited above, Toward A New Psychology of Women (1976), which she revised in 1987. She co-authors this latest volume with Stone Center colleagues Judith Jordan, Alexandra Kaplan, Irene Stiver and Janet Surrey, all of whom have had college-level teaching positions as well as extensive clinical experience. The seventeen papers included in the group's first book represent only "a sampling" of the now over fifty "Working Papers" the five senior members and their associates have produced. The focus here will be on their ideas with particular relevance to the question of how sexism affects intimate relationships, with some consideration also given to gender dynamics in therapy.

Fundamental to Stone Center theory is the concept of psychological growth for women as a process that is inherently relational as well as continuous throughout life. As Janet Surrey writes in "The Self-in-Relation: A Theory of Women's Development":

The assumption is that the self is organized and developed through practice in relationships where the goal is the increasing development of mutually empathic relationships ... Relationship is seen as the basic goal of development: i.e., the deepening capacity for relationship and relational competence ... (and) other aspects of self (eg. creativity, autonomy, assertion) develop within this primary context.

(Women's Growth in Connection, 54, 53)

In "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," originally presented as a paper at the Stone Center in 1981, Miller contrasts the concept of self-in-relation with prevailing theories of psychological development as a process of increasing differentiation and autonomy. She describes the beginnings of the sense of self in infancy as inherently interactive and "in relation" - even questioning the relevance of terms such as "fusion" and "separateness" and emphasizing that "the central character of that interaction involves attending to each other's mental states and emotions."

Drawing on the evolution of the relationship of mother and daughter as "the earliest model" of development of self-in-relation and "the beginning of a process," Surrey goes on to show how the mother's empathic responsiveness to the daughter's interest and need for connection initiates the life-long two-way learning of mutual empathy, caretaking, and empowerment that is central to women's development of self and self esteem. Jordan, Surrey, and Kaplan challenge traditional associations of empathy with "loss of identity," "regression, symbiosis, and merger of ego boundaries" and suggest instead that empathic functioning requires "a high level of psychological development and ego strength," "a well-differentiated sense of self," "an appreciation of and sensitivity to the differentness as well as the sameness of

another person," "flexible ego boundaries," as well as "surrender to feelings and active cognitive structuring."

Kaplan extends the analysis of the affective and cognitive components of empathy, recognizing the "deep ... interpenetration of feelings" and "intensity and interconnectedness" that characterize empathic attunement. But contrary to object relations theory which represents empathy as a "somewhat magical and mysterious process ... (involving) temporary fusion followed by separation," Kaplan emphasizes the simultaneous maintenance of "self-integrity" as equally essential to that "complicated intellectual and emotional process" integral to both mothering and therapy. Jordan adds: "Without empathy, there is no intimacy, no real attainment of an appreciation of the paradox of separateness within connection."

In addition to empathy, the dimension of mutuality is explored and presented as critical to relational development. Jordan describes in "The Meaning of Mutuality" what happens in a mutual exchange:

... one is both affecting the other and being affected by the other; one extends oneself out to the other and is also receptive to the impact of the other. There is openness to influence, emotional availability, and a constantly changing pattern of responding to and affecting the other's state. There is ... an appreciation of the wholeness of the other person, with a special awareness of the other's subjective experience ... an intense affirmation of the self and ... a transcendence of the self, a sense of the self as part of a larger relational unit ... a relaxation of the sense of separateness; the other's well-being becomes as important as one's own. (Women's Growth in Connection, 82)

Mutuality, or "mutual intersubjectivity" by this definition requires two-way empathy, and more - "a matching of intensity of involvement and interest, an investment in the exchange that is for both the self and the other."

Referring to studies of infants and infant-mother relationships, Jordan points to the early "precursors of (mutual) empathy" in Stern's "mental state sharing and tuning" between infant and mother, Sander's noting of the shared "'regulation of reciprocal exchange' by the age of 3 to 6 months" and Kagan's suggestion that children as young as two years have some capacity for "inferring a psychological state in another person based on their prior experience" - and by three may have some sense of another's self as well as their own. Sullivan is also mentioned as one who noticed "early empathic responsiveness of the infant to the mother." (85, 87) With this supportive evidence, a concept of "mutual relational responsibility" is introduced which incorporates Surrey's shared "taking care of the relationship" as "crucial to (its) maintenance" from infancy onward.

Gender differences in mutuality are described as one source of painful imbalance in relationships and suggested using tentative terms like "it may be... " and "often... " Tendencies ascribed to women include: being "more attuned to shifts in feelings" and "focused more on inner action," wanting "the man's presence and acknowledgment (as well as

sensitivity to and) witnessing of their feelings." Men, on the other hand, are characterized as being "more alert to behavioral or ideational changes in the other," "often seem(ing) propelled into action to change or remove offending feelings" and generally focusing "more on (goal directed) action."

Jordan mentions other sources of empathic relational imbalance with seeming gender associations: "boundary rigidity" and "narcissistic relating" - more often typical of men uncomfortable with emotional expression or with awareness of needing another; depression and "one-sided nurturing" - more frequently experienced by women feeling "used and devalued." She also emphasizes that "a motivation for personal power ... (or) dominance vis-a-vis another ... eliminates the possibility of..." mutuality.

Looking at the therapy relationship in particular, the need for focus on the client's experience precludes complete mutuality, while the healing process benefits from and may require " ... respect, emotional availability, openness to change...(and) real caring that (go) both ways."

In "Female or Male Psychotherapists for Women: New Formulations," Kaplan suggests that Orlinsky and Howard (1978) represent many findings on therapy outcome when they emphasize the importance over treatment techniques of "the positive quality of the relational bond, as exemplified in

the reciprocal interpersonal behavior of the participants." [my emphasis] (273) She underlines possibilities for less effective or even detrimental therapy with women because of gender differences in relational orientation which can especially interfere with accurate empathic attunement and mutuality between male therapists and female clients.

Particularly noting gender differences in orientation to issues of status and sense of self now supported by twenty years of growing research, Kaplan hypothesizes potential tendencies of the female therapist, who might be:

... especially cognizant of present interactional considerations in her clinical work and more receptive to the client's ongoing affective experience ... particularly apt to use herself as an empathic vehicle through which greater understanding of the client is reached ... especially sensitive to the dangers of overstepping the boundaries of her authority, concerned about making arbitrary or capricious decisions, and likely to check out the meaning of her decisions for her client - or wonder if a decision was the best one.

She goes on to offer the likely complementary attitudes of the male therapist, who might:

... build less on affective connectedness and more on questioning or interpreting the client's remarks...(handle affect) more in terms of its transferential implications and less as a process of mutual exploration within the on-going therapy relationship ... be comfortable with the dominant aspects of his therapy role, less apt to worry about overstepping boundaries, and less likely to weigh his decision-making process based on the client's reaction. (271)

Kaplan is aware of the varying degrees within individuals of these supposedly gender-specific tendencies, and also acknowledges the paucity of therapy research to give greater validity to her speculations. However, she states firmly that "traditional psychological theory and the cultural mores within which therapy is embedded strongly support and affirm the male reality." (281)

She also offers examples of therapeutic dimensions where a relational orientation could significantly modify male bias and enhance the therapist's empathy and effectiveness: communication of believable validation, identification with the patient's experience, and non-defensive responsiveness to conflicts with patients. Kaplan challenges female and male therapists and all involved in training them to wake up to the limitations of male-biased theory and practice in psychotherapy. She points to the possibilities inherent in embracing a relational orientation to women's development and to the therapy process itself, so that the therapist (and supervisor or consultant) can be participant/facilitators of a re-orienting experience of relational competence.

Jordan elaborates on this idea in "Empathy, Mutuality and Therapeutic Change: Clinical Implications of a Relational Model," the concluding essay in Women's Growth in Connection.

The goal in therapy is not to make women divert their attention from the relational context but to provide an opportunity to develop a new integration of self-other experience in which the validity of one's own experience as well as the other's gets acknowledged. (283-4)

The key to this development is learning through therapy "to expand relational presence ... through the enhancement of empathy for other and for self." [my emphasis] (283)

Summary

The preceding theories from the growing field of the psychology of women are crucial to understanding how sexism impacts relationships, including psychotherapy. Attending to the dimensions of interpersonal power (personal empowerment), moral choice, confidence in one's own mind and voice, and the capacity for empathy and mutuality in relationships has yielded significantly different experiences generally, though not exclusively, corresponding to gender. These findings hold major implications for any cross-gender relationship, but especially for efforts at authentic and intimate connection, of which psychotherapy is or hopes to be one of the most aware.

Some of the themes and implications that have emerged from this review are the following:

- The systematic over-valuing of men and masculinity and devaluing of women and femininity built into cultural

institutions create conditions and expectations of domination by males and subordination of females which distort relationships between the sexes, and block potential for authentic relationship with the self.

- Psychological theory has evolved out of the overwhelmingly male-created and male-biased field of study of mostly male subjects. This has resulted in massive omissions and distortions of women's experience, which must be corrected before psychology of human beings can ever be truly represented.

- In particular, developmental theory has reflected male thinking and values that possibly derive from the male child's need to disidentify from the female caretaker in order to achieve appropriate gender identification. The traditional emphasis on increasing separation and autonomy, and relationship with "objects" as a means to that end, do not reflect female experience or values.

- The central organizing importance of the relational orientation of females throughout the life cycle, as well as the relational dimension of male development, must be considered deeply and seriously in order to correct psychological theory for both genders.

- Relational competence requires mutually empathic responsiveness which cannot be achieved in inter-gender relationships while only females are oriented to the development of empathy toward others (and shamed for

directing it toward themselves), and males are actually discouraged from learning it at all.

- Part of the damage done to females and to males by sexist society and male-biased social sciences has been the collective loss of the female experience and perspective to balance, challenge, strengthen and enrich male thinking and being. Women's confidence in their power to know what they know and to speak what they know has been sacrificed on the altar of men's false empowerment, generating destructive habits of denial and inauthentic relations between the sexes. The reclaiming of women's knowledge and women's voice is essential to the process of healing for both genders on the individual, relational and collective levels.

- One of the obstacles to achieving this change can be women's excessively relational orientation, when it results in compulsive empathy for others and deficient empathy for the self. When fundamental self-awareness, expression and assertion are systematically hampered by the inner and outer requirement to attend to and caretake others first, the resulting imbalance is ultimately not healthy for anyone involved.

- Empathic attunement is required from healers in order to grow self-empathy, confidence, and speech in the voiceless. Therapy with women requires awareness of the damage that

has been done by sexism and understanding of the multiple layers of self-doubt, self-criticism and self-blame that have been embedded in women's consciousness. Living within a psychological web which defines them - from the most impersonal institutional level to the most deeply intimate as by their very nature relationally oriented beings - and then criticizes, devalues, constricts and punishes them for that - is much of what creates these layers of insecurity. Empathic attunement to this reality is required to teach women to direct some of the rich resource of female empathy that has sustained men and children, families and groups and causes of all kinds - feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, nursing the sick, soothing the troubled, covering for the incompetent, understanding the arrogant or self-deceiving, tolerating the violent - shifting some of this profoundly important capacity toward the female self.

- The process of developing self-empathy or "self, mind and voice" can involve risks to one's relational network because critical choices must sometimes be made between nurturing self and other, and consequences follow those decisions. Although women tend to remain more relationally oriented than men in terms of maintaining an empathic awareness of the possible effects of their choices on all their human connections, they may at times need to withdraw some of their energy from them in order to

re-direct it into attending, exploring and building a relationship with the self.

- The challenge for the healing partnership is to help to build self-empathy in women without sacrificing the capacity for empathy with others and the connectedness that is so often for women a, if not the, primary source of meaning and purpose in their lives - as well as being a critical part of the essential glue that holds together the fabric of most relationships, families, communities and human society.

- The conditions and expectations of domination by males and subordination of females that are the primary lessons of sexist society are absorbed by everyone, female and male, therapist and client alike. These attitudes are carried to one degree or another into every inter-gender relationship by both participants, influencing feelings, perceptions, roles and possible outcomes for the interaction. Individual, couple and family therapists must attend to this level of reality in their clients and in themselves, and learn to incorporate this awareness into every aspect of their work in theory and practice from intake to termination - or - risk countering their healing efforts by reinforcing the intra and interpersonal distortions and damages of sexism in adults and thereby perpetuating them in children.

- Therapists, trainers, supervisors, consultants must take into account their own gender conditioning and orientation to sexism in order to understand more clearly and co-create more honestly the mutually eliciting reciprocal process of relationship that is the heart of therapeutic endeavor.

Couple Relationships

Among the many guides to helping couple relationships that have emerged in recent years are three that offer substantial and concrete assistance to this author. The works of Harville Hendrix, Hal Stone and Sidra Winkelman, and Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks have contributed greatly to this author's general understanding of couple dynamics, practice of couples counseling, and the theoretical foundation for the adjunct integrative approach to be developed here. These works have in common their intentional address to both professionals and the lay public, in the interest of providing couples with theoretical and practical tools that can be applied directly and independently as "self-help" for relationships in need of improvement, or to be used in conjunction with individual or couple work in formal therapy.

These authors share a pragmatic and eclectic orientation that for all grew out of the experience of struggle within their own couple relationships. Their admitted needs for greater mastery and balance in the personal arena as well as for enhancement of professional competence allowed them to draw out and synthesize elements from many quarters of the healing arts and sciences that could contribute to their understanding and effectiveness both as therapists and as members of couple relationships in on-going process. In addition, the works to be

reviewed incorporate, to varying degrees, certain similarities in emphasis: an assumption of the existence and interaction of multiple aspects, parts, or subpersonalities rather than a unified experience or expression of the self in relation; a belief in the importance of bringing into awareness and working with connections between current relationship problems and the inevitable wounds suffered in childhood with primary caretakers; a valuing of the roles of feelings and the body as well as the mind in the change process; a conviction that healing and fulfillment for both people and their partnership are more likely with increasingly flexible definitions of sex-role for both genders; and a belief in the potentially limitless possibilities for individual growth, actualization and transformation through the work of developing conscious committed intimate relationship.

Hendrix

In the Introduction to Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples (1988), Harville Hendrix briefly chronicles the intertwining personal and professional process that led to his development of Imago Relationship Therapy, which was motivated by his divorce and resulting search for insight into "the powerful emotions that can destroy a marriage." Frustrated in his attempt to find a meaningful framework for understanding his own experience

in psychological literature, he used his research and his private practice, seminars, and workshops with couples to evolve a theory and practice of couples counseling integrating aspects of depth psychology, the behavioral sciences and the Western spiritual tradition with elements of Transactional Analysis, Gestalt psychology, cognitive therapy and systems theory.

Imago Therapy is based on the premise that people are relentlessly drawn for their intimate partnerships to others who will embody some combination of significant positive and negative traits familiar to them from their parents or other early caretakers. The intensity and reliability of this pull toward those who will inevitably be both a refuge and a challenge are due in large part to the opportunity provided by such a match to heal wounds inflicted by their original counterparts. In other words, by choosing, on a level outside of awareness, a life partner who shares some of the most valued strengths and some of the most problematic weaknesses of one's mother and father, the stage is set for repetition of certain emotional aspects of the childhood experience of intimacy in the present relationship - since the current connection will feel in some ways like the earlier parent-child bond for both people.

This situation guarantees possibilities - and ultimately expectations - both for deep pleasure and for

intense pain - because these are originally experienced most powerfully in relation to parents' provision or withholding of nurturance in response to the child's feelings and needs. New couples are most likely to be aware first of the positive associations with need fulfillment, which are essential to the initial romantic attraction and inspire trust, and then later to feel the impact of the negative associations with need frustration and fear as they begin to discover more about each other.

Hendrix ascribes this tendency to the unconscious or what he calls the "old brain" - the brain stem and the limbic system. These areas function together by comparing with stored information the incoming data produced by the "new brain" or cerebral cortex in order to instantaneously discern broad categories of safety or threat and generate strong emotions and physical action. The "new brain" or conscious mind is logical, orderly and analytical, while the reactions of the "old brain" are more primitive, instinctual, and "trapped in the eternal now."

This means that while one part of the brain is processing information about a prospective partner according to selected factors for mate selection such as physical appearance, apparent family background, educational or occupational status, qualities of kindness or good humor, capacity for caretaking, etc., another part of the brain, concerned primarily with self-preservation,

is propelling its owner physically and emotionally away from or toward the other based on a different and very powerful set of criteria. The fundamental purpose of this arrangement is, according to Hendrix, to ensure that the primary relationship will provide both people with possibilities for the healing of childhood wounds, the restoration of "original wholeness," and the fulfillment of more of their human potential.

Another dimension of childhood development that reemerges importantly in the process of building adult intimacy is the phenomenon of the "Lost" "False" and "Disowned" Selves. These terms refer to parts of the child's self that were discouraged or actively rejected by the caretakers to the extent that the child had to deny, hide or even eliminate them to win adult approval. The Lost Self contains hidden capacities that did not fit with others' expectations and therefore moved out of conscious awareness. Socialization often systematically restricts the experience of bodily pleasures and the expression of strong emotions, for example, and these potentials are then retained in this part of the self that is mentally underground and virtually inaccessible to normal experiencing. The False Self develops to further mask these forbidden aspects with an acceptable protective facade. But this cover is not flawless and includes imperfections that draw criticism and then collectively

compose the Disowned Self, also relegated out of awareness. It is on the level of the unconscious that prospective partners are screened for their potential to provide both the challenge and the safety for the False Self to relinquish its hold and for the denied elements to return to consciousness.

The partner who resonates with the "old brain" as deeply familiar in both positive and negative ways is the one who arouses the most intense and insistent interest. Referred to by Hendrix as the "Imago" match, this person registers an impression of being necessary for survival, and his or her presence brings the lover a special feeling of completeness and a strange sense of déjà vu or having prior experience together. Since this process is happening for two people at once, there is for a time a softened perception of self and other, a mutual empathy and openness to one's own and each other's deeply felt reality, and a shared spontaneous generosity. This period is likely to be a reminder on a level out of awareness of the sweetest moments of oneness and uncomplicated nurturance each experienced as an infant or young child, thus resurrecting and feeding the fantasy of instant gratification of barely communicated needs.

Hendrix points out that sooner or later these romantic feelings surrender to an emerging awareness of separation and difference that tends to elicit from both

partners a degree of denial and pretense in order to preserve at least the illusion of their seemingly effortless and delightful intertwining. It is at this point that power struggles begin and the hidden complexity of the relationship invites and demands individual and collective growth and movement toward greater consciousness. Since many couples do not handle this fall from grace constructively, this is also the point at which disappointment and conflict needing to surface are met with avoidance or fearful confrontation instead of acceptance, and the potential partnership either dissolves or takes the often long and frustrating path of trying to cling to the earlier romance and fighting off inevitable changes and possible growth and learning.

How the Imago, so carefully selected by the unconscious for his or her almost mystical potential to create the relational context for healing and transformation, turns from most intimate ally to enemy is not a mystery in Hendrix's formulation. This seeming betrayal is built into the process of moving the dynamics of the relationship into conscious awareness so that the necessary work toward those glorious ends can begin. In the dream-like state of ecstatic romantic union, the other is experienced as if he or she were actually corresponding to an inner image or sense of what is felt to be needed for wholeness. But the other never actually is this image; the

other is a screen upon which the lover successfully projects that image in order for the bonding to take place.

For a while, the similarities the lover's unconscious has perceived between this other and the inner Imago suffice for the projection to be complete. The positive elements of the Imago temporarily overwhelm and obscure the negative parts from awareness and allow the intoxicating initial attraction to occur. But when something happens that triggers an awakening to the existence in the other of a negative Imago aspect that is hurtful in an old intolerably familiar way, feelings of fear are as exaggerated and out of proportion as the earlier feelings of blissful union were. In other words, there is often at this point a terror that the worst of childhood woundings is to be repeated or surpassed at the hands of this chosen being who seemed until now so different from and possibly even superior to well-intended but imperfect Mom and Dad.

The challenge is to reclaim the projections in order to begin to see the other more realistically - and to learn to know the projected elements as parts of the self. This is the journey, Hendrix asserts, from Unconscious to Conscious Marriage. And it is a path few are willing to take, partly because of not knowing what is required - and partly because what is required can be a lot of hard work. Instead of rising to the challenge, most couples get entrenched in the belief that the partner is intentionally

withholding nurturance and then engage in some form of on-going mutual blaming for their problems which can lead them through predictable stages of the power struggle that Hendrix parallels with Kubler-Ross's stages of grief in a dying person. From the shock of facing the frightening truth that the beloved can cause the worst kind of hurt, couples move into denial, then to feelings of betrayal and anger. Next is bargaining in order to avoid losing the whole relationship, (the stage most couples are in when they enter into counseling according to Hendrix), and then, if they do not find help, despair and/or the creation of a non-intimate parallel marriage in which each goes his or her own way to get most needs met.

The alternative route Hendrix recommends is the creation of a conscious marriage - which he defines as "a marriage that fosters maximum psychological and spiritual growth" - and which generally requires a major shift in attitude and behavior. He presents a six-step program that begins with "Becoming Conscious" - and proposes "Ten Characteristics of a Conscious Marriage" to be internalized by both partners as fundamental for change.

- 1/ You realize that your relationship has a hidden purpose
- the healing of childhood wounds.
- 2/ You create a more accurate image of your partner.
- 3/ You take responsibility for communicating your needs
and desires to your partner.
- 4/ You become more intentional in your interactions.

- 5/ You learn to value your partner's needs and wishes as highly as you value your own.
- 6/ You embrace the dark side of your personality.
- 7/ You learn new techniques to satisfy your basic needs and desires.
- 8/ You search within yourself for strengths and abilities you are lacking.
- 9/ You become more aware of your drive to be loving and whole and united with the universe.
- 10/ You accept the difficulty of creating a good marriage.

Although he mentions it last, he emphasizes the importance of Number Ten - "because none of the other nine ideas will come to fruition unless you first cultivate your willingness to grow and change." At the same time he is understanding of the difficulty of what he is asking couples to do in that ...

... most of us go through married life as if we were asleep, engaging in routine interactions that give little pleasure ... (living) impoverished, repetitious, unrewarding lives and (blaming) our partners for our unhappiness ... (100)

With so many years of habituated behaviors, it's only natural (to) experience a great reluctance to change. After all, I am asking them not only to risk the anxiety of learning a new style of relating, but also to confront the pain and fear that have been bottled up inside them for decades - the reason for their dysfunctional behavior in the first place. (97)

Step #2 is focused on building commitment and requires "closing your exits," which are the many strategies couples use unconsciously out of fear of closeness to prevent intimate contact and ultimate relationship success. To help couples in counseling to

counter these tendencies, Hendrix establishes certain groundrules and assigns several specific tasks. He contracts with them for a minimum of twelve consecutive sessions and very early draws out the couple's conjoint vision of how they would like their relationship to be, asking them to affirm their vision daily throughout the course of therapy. Requesting an additional commitment to remain together and not to end the relationship by suicide, murder or insanity during this time period, Hendrix also challenges other typical less obvious exit patterns: over-scheduling activities, over-involvement with children, addiction to work, etc.

"Creating a Zone of Safety" is Step #3 and involves assigning the enactment of caring behaviors (modeled after Richard Stuart's "Caring Days" exercise in Helping Couples Change (1980)) in order to structure some degree of romantic behavior back into the relationship. In Step #4 couples are coached in "Increasing Your Knowledge of Yourself and Your Partner" through looking for hidden agendas and disowned character traits in the self and spoken and unspoken criticisms of the other. The possibility that chronic criticisms can point the way toward important relational truths is a central emphasis in Hendrix's work. Although he also warns that complaints about the partner can be projections of disowned parts of the self - he strongly recommends that people in intimate

relationship LISTEN to each other's criticisms for the kernel of truth that might help them to learn and grow. He encourages a curious and non-defensive attitude toward criticism and suggests four principles to guide this kind of consideration:

- 1/ Most of your partner's criticisms of you have some basis in reality.
- 2/ Many of your repetitious, emotional criticisms of your partner are disguised statements of your own unmet needs.
- 3/ Some of your repetitive, emotional criticisms of your partner may be an accurate description of a disowned part of yourself.
- 4/ Some of your criticisms of your partner may help you identify your own lost self.

Step #5 is "Defining Your Curriculum" and entails in part converting each chronic criticism of the partner into a desire, and then into a positive specific behavioral goal. The final Step #6 "Containing Rage" is directed toward managing anger that can easily arise in couples work, reclaiming its vitality in people who have tried to eliminate it entirely and learning "containment" in order to have and express it effectively without hurting others or the self.

Hendrix's program for moving from Unconscious to Conscious Marriage also outlines sixteen specific exercises intended to lead through the Six Steps to greater awareness and behavioral change, reinforcing new insight with action. Some of these are intended to improve the couple's

communication, such as the "Mirroring" exercise. Based on Carl Rogers' suggestion for a communication experiment in his classic 1961 volume On Becoming A Person, this simple but often difficult exercise is sometimes referred to as "Active Listening" and appears in one form or another in many works on couples counseling. To build up the skills and mutual empathy, each person is required to re-state the other's communication accurately to the partner's satisfaction before expressing him or herself.

Calling his "Container Transaction" "a graduate level version of the Mirroring exercise," Hendrix also suggests that it is "a license to be a child again, only this time with a supportive, validating parent." He strongly recommends three groundrules to protect the couple from the potentially destructive effects of expressing intensely negative feelings:

- 1/ no leaving the room during the exercise
- 2/ no hostile touching of the partner or damaging property
- 3/ angry remarks must refer to behavior, not to character

One partner is the Container for the other and is instructed to visualize him or her "as a hurting child" while listening to their angry or hurt feelings - which are then paraphrased back to the partner's satisfaction, as in the Mirroring exercise.

Other tasks are directed to identifying "childhood wounds," "childhood frustrations" and "unfinished business"

to bring to awareness some of the early experiences that can be coloring the current couple relationship. The "imago" is developed by listing positive and negative traits of both parents, which are then prioritized according to which ones affect the person the most. The "partner profile" generates a similar list of ranked qualities, then the lists are compared to reveal the similarities between parents and partner that create both the attraction and the potentially healing and transformative emotional challenges of intimacy.

Stone and Winkelman

In Embracing Each Other: Relationship as Teacher, Healer and Guide (1989), married therapists Hal Stone and Sidra Winkelman, both clinical psychologists with some Jungian background, apply their Voice Dialogue theory and method, (explained in the Inner Child section of this chapter) to intimate relationship. They base their approach on the assumption that each person contains an "Inner Family" of selves or subpersonalities that either replicate or react against the personality patterns of their parents and significant others from childhood and collectively determine the experience of relationship.

The "Vulnerable Child" is the original and essential self, " ... of utmost sensitivity, (carrying) the ability to relate intimately to others ... (and) our psychic

fingerprint ... the doorway to our most profound states of being." (5) Because of the openness and vulnerability of this part of the self, other parts are needed to protect it from harm. These protective or "Primary Selves" develop and grow to ensure psychic survival, but at the cost of interfering with possibilities for intimate connection that could result in hurt. Therefore, the building of relationship will necessarily involve an inner struggle between the Vulnerable Child who craves intimate contact and the Protector Selves whose priority is safety and self-preservation.

A breakdown of this protective part of the personality differentiates five Primary Selves: the Protector/Controller, the Pusher, the Perfectionist, the Inner Critic and the Pleaser, all of whom have specific functions on behalf of the Vulnerable Child that can be hurtful as well as helpful, especially in relation to the pursuit of intimate connection.

For all of the Primary Selves there are opposites which are equally powerful but out of awareness and therefore referred to as "Disowned Selves" - and under this rubric fall many of the qualities and tendencies of the Vulnerable Child. People tend to consciously identify with the most powerful of the Primary Selves, the Protector/Controller, also called the "Acting Ego," which "sets the tone and value structure for the personality,"

and to disidentify with or disown parts associated with vulnerability.

Stone and Winkelman emphasize the power of the Disowned Selves to make themselves known through the automatic process of projection. In this process there are inner images of these "rejected parts of the inner family" which are almost literally "projected" onto other people as if they were blank movie screens - so that these parts come into awareness only if a person is sufficiently attuned to this possibility to notice it happening. It is the attitudes and behaviors in others that arouse the most intense positive or negative responses which are cues to the disowned parts of the self. This, the authors assert, is "the paradox of disowned selves":

... we are drawn to the very people who carry these "unacceptable" qualities for us. This holds true whether the "unacceptable" qualities are good or bad; it applies to persons we overvalue as well as those we despise. Life will constantly bring us face to face with people who represent our disowned selves, until we begin to reclaim them. (16)

Therefore, the very act of "falling in love" - with its attendant overwhelming emotions - can be considered an experience of projection in which two people are powerfully drawn to each other at least in part because they unconsciously sense the presence of - and the possibility of reunion with - disowned parts of themselves. The stage is thus set for relationship to develop on the unconscious

level through what Stone and Winkelman call "Bonding Patterns."

The authors define bonding patterns as "the activation of parent/child patterns of interaction between two people." Although these are "normal and natural configurations that exist in all relationships," these patterns are also "the primary reason for the disintegration of the romance and the feelings of love in relationship." Either positive or negative in emotional charge, the basic male-female bonding pattern links the daughter in the woman to the father in the man, and the son in the man to the mother in the woman. In other words, each person will be predisposed to react to the beloved other as if he or she were either a parent or a child rather than a partner. Or, in terms of the Disowned Selves, each will at times be projecting either the child-like part of the self or the parental part onto the partner, who will in all likelihood be doing the same.

Positive bonding patterns exist in all voluntary relationships - the recreation of positive elements of earlier important relationships in newer ones is considered unavoidable -and as long as the connection is comfortable, this dynamic is generally not even noticed. As long as the parent in each partner is experienced by the child in the other as generally nurturant, the bonding pattern can remain positive and fulfilling to the Vulnerable Child, and

reassuring to the ever-watchful Primary Selves. But when a major problem arises, especially between two intimate partners who have become accustomed to the soothing benefits of this unconscious arrangement, it can seem like an intentional betrayal as the bonding pattern turns negative. Then the child part in each person feels abandoned or abused by the other's parent part, and the Primary Selves take control so that interactions become governed more by fear rather than trust and love.

According to Stone and Winkelman, the process of relationship is a "dance of bonding patterns." Positive bonding - or mutual projection of disowned positive parts of the self - is necessary for attraction to occur, and there must be a fit between aspects of the parent and child parts of both people for intimate relationship to have a chance to develop. In other words, there must be some potential for the Vulnerable Child within each to feel positively parented by the other for the urge toward openness to triumph over the usually higher priority of self-protection and allow two people to feel and act on their attraction. Then, as the relationship continues and differences between the partners emerge, it is inevitable that the child's illusion of having finally found the perfect parent in the other will be threatened, and although the bonding pattern continues in place, it feels less like a refuge and more like a painful trap.

The shift from a positive to a negative bonding pattern is an important point in the process of developing relationship, and a crucial opportunity for learning and growth. Because both bonding patterns involve a disowning of the Vulnerable Child - who in either case is essentially given over for care to the parent part in the partner - the shift from pleasure to pain can provide the stimulus to reclaim this disowned part of the self.

Ironically, the vulnerability that was disowned in the process of establishing the positive bonding is also necessary for intimacy. "The vulnerable child is the actual self within each of us that carries our emotional reality." (36) In relationship, disowning the vulnerable child means rejection of the very part of the self that motivates the search for emotional connection and contributes the willingness to take risks on behalf of getting close.

By being disowned and not being allowed the chance to be expressed in relationship, this child side goes more deeply underground, where it becomes increasingly needy and vulnerable and begins to exert a powerful effect on one's life. (75)

The "underground" child disowned by the self demands to be fed - by the partner - and does so in unconscious ways that reduce positive feelings between two people and ultimately can destroy their intimacy completely.

The key to limiting the destructive effects of bonding patterns is in the cultivation of consciousness,

which the authors define as a process with three different levels of activity. The first or Awareness level has to do with observing whatever is happening internally or externally without attachment to meanings or outcomes - as an uninvolved dispassionate "Witness." Experience of the Different Selves is the activity of Level 2, where the full range of emotional responses and inner conflicts registers. It is on Level 3 that the Aware Ego functions to hold the tension of the opposites, bringing a detached awareness to the balancing of the emotionally charged voices of the different selves.

The Aware Ego is distinguished from the traditional concept of an executive decision-making part of the self, defined in this work as whichever of the Primary (protective) Selves the person is most identified with at the moment, which is then, because of the identification, felt to be the "rational" self or so-called Operating Ego. The Aware Ego has the capacity to continually take in the experience of the different selves without identifying with any of them, maintaining contact with all the varied parts and holding the tension between them.

An aware ego is surrendered to the process of the evolution of consciousness ... (and as such) it accepts the sacred task of becoming aligned with all the various energy configurations that constitute who we are as human beings ... it is open to the total range of possible experiences ... (embracing) them all, positive and negative, "acceptable" and "unacceptable" ... (honoring) all the different selves and energies exactly as though they were gods and goddesses. (29-30)

It is through the activity of the Aware Ego that the power of negative bonding patterns can be challenged and redirected toward individual and couple development. Out of awareness, the pull of the disowned parent-disowned child dimension of interaction is strong. As one or both of the partners cultivates an Aware Ego, more parts of the self are available for consideration, and the unconscious dynamics are exposed and weakened. Then both people have the chance to acknowledge and reclaim their disowned vulnerability as well as their self-nurturing capacities and parental power. This is the act which releases them from the bonding and frees them to interact as adults with a much greater range of choices.

The inability to communicate the feelings of the vulnerable child is the primary source of problems and disruptions in personal relationships ... The key is to be aware of the vulnerability that lies within each of us and to be able to communicate its reality while still being related to the power on the other side. (78)

The Primary Selves, in the interest of self-preservation, evolve as powerful parts of the personality. From a critical judgmental stance, they parent the Vulnerable Child, internally poking and prodding and pushing in order to strengthen defenses and prepare for inevitable external attack. Although inhibiting to possible intimate contact with others, they function to build an individual's resources for mastering other

developmental tasks. One can have power over another in relationship through responding to the directives of the Primary Selves, for whom a position of domination is preferable to one of openness and vulnerability. And in reality ...

Being powerful in relationship ... being identified with the parental side and disowning vulnerability ... (may mean learning) how to express oneself, how to be very direct about things, and how to get what one wants or needs ... (which) is obviously very important ... because (otherwise) it is very easy to be a victim. (78)

But true Empowerment in relationship, according to Stone and Winkelman, is only achieved through the practice of consciousness. Through cultivating an Aware Ego, it is possible to bring respectful attention to the interplay of the many parts of the self, including the protective Primary Selves and the Vulnerable Child. Through balancing dispassionate Awareness and the Experience of the Different Selves, partners can reclaim their projections and allow their Disowned Selves to gradually emerge, increasing their possibilities for self-knowledge and self-actualization. It is the "journey" of intimate relationship that raises these challenges for those who are open to them, motivates people to do the hard work necessary, and provides a path - through these efforts to connect with another -to a more complete experience of the self.

Hendricks and Hendricks

In Conscious Loving: The Journey to Co-Commitment (1990), Gay Hendricks, psychologist and professor at the University of Colorado, and Kathlyn Hendricks, movement therapist and educator, present their theory and self-help program for transforming unconscious "co-dependent entanglements" into conscious relationships. Admitting that they have been "on painfully intimate terms with ... dysfunctional patterns," they assert that their own relationship "has been the catalyst for unparalleled growth and creativity" in their lives.

Commitment is a major theme throughout their work - and the first of seven steps of their process is to have both partners agree to six Essential Co-Commitments or Intentions:

- 1/ I commit myself to full closeness, and to clearing up anything within me that stands in the way.
- 2/ I commit myself to my own complete development as an individual.
- 3/ I commit myself to revealing myself fully in the relationship, not to concealing myself.
- 4/ I commit myself to the full empowerment of the people around me.
- 5/ I commit myself to acting from the awareness that I am 100% the source of my reality.
- 6/ I commit myself to having a good time in my close relationships.

Noting that this requirement predictably brings to light hidden counter-commitments, and acknowledging that this is one step in what is actually "the work of a lifetime," they still insist that couples can follow their program for change painlessly, through a "comfortable transition." And this is only Step #1.

Step #2 appears perhaps even more daunting: Learning to Love Yourself. Fortunately, the authors describe aspects of this challenge which make it seem more do-able. Primary among them is learning to distinguish between one's self and one's actions. Preserving the concern for behavioral improvement where it is needed, the emphasis is on welcoming into awareness and embracing all the parts of the self. The entire range of feelings must be allowed - including those that pertain to the often criticized body.

Step #3 is Learning to Feel those feelings - just for the experience of being more alive. This involves learning to recognize and differentiate between them, especially the so-called "Core Feelings" - sadness, fear, anger, joy, excitement and sexual feelings. As part of this step, the Hendricks urge couples to "give themselves permission to feel" whatever is present for them - and to learn another of the key lessons of much of psychotherapy: the difference between having feelings and acting on them. Other emphases are on locating the body sensations that correspond to emotions to make feelings more concrete and

less scary - and - allowing oneself the experience of a feeling or "energy cycle" to run to its full intensity and completion, rather than cutting it short for oneself or the other. And finally, looking beneath the feelings for what is the underlying want is considered crucial to resolving inner or outer conflict.

Step #4, Reclaiming Creativity, is the most important and essential change in attitude on the road to Co-Committed Relationship: "the act of taking 100% responsibility for creating things the way they are ... (switching) from being a victim to being the source of what is happening to you." It is the opposite of Co-Dependence, which is "two people fighting over who is responsible" - each accusing and blaming the other. It is also the opposite of Projection, which is, according to these authors, "the act of denying that you are creating the experience you are having ... (and) the major cause of relationship conflict."

To stop projecting one's own unaware feelings or internal processes onto the partner, and to reclaim responsibility and creativity, members of a couple are encouraged to answer two questions: "How am I creating this conflict?" - and - "how can I give and receive more positive energy?" Although there is risk in taking responsibility unilaterally, because the partner might respond by blaming rather than following suit, this stance

is considered healthier for both the individual and the relationship than assuming victimhood.

Learning to Tell the Microscopic Truth is Step #5 - a particularly challenging requirement for many, if not most, couples. The Hendricks define the "microscopic truth" as "that which absolutely cannot be argued about," "a clear statement of feeling, of body sensation, or of what you actually did," "specifics of what is happening right now," "the deepest and most subtle truth you can see or feel." They advise becoming sensitive to non-verbal expressions of "disguised intentions" in the self and the other, and insist that the only motivation that is clean of these distortions is the desire "to communicate one's internal experience." One of the ways to determine whether or not the microscopic truth is being told is to notice after communicating to the partner what are the effects in one's own body. There should be a "lightness and energy" or a "clear high feeling." Although the issue of timing is important, caution is advised that it can also be used to postpone truth-telling out of fear.

Step #6 - Keeping Agreements - is another essential expression of Co-Commitment. Two particularly predictable reasons for failure at this in intimate relationships are, in the Hendricks' experience, fear of closeness and of the aliveness that can come from it - and - suppressed anger at the partner. The proper response to having broken an

agreement is, again, to tell the other person the microscopic truth.

Step #7 is given an expanded treatment because the authors consider it "The Only Problem You Need to Solve in a Co-Committed Relationship." This is: Learning to Live in a State of Continuous Positive Energy. Here they question the common assumption that feeling good must end sooner or later with a bout of feeling bad. They believe that this attitude is generally learned from parents who are threatened by the seemingly limitless energy of children and frequently set hurtful limits on their emotional experiencing and self-expression. Adults then transfer this learning into their intimate relationships and unconsciously cut off their positive energy unnecessarily through arguments, addictions, accidents, illness, worries, lies, and broken agreements. This is called "The Upper Limits Problem."

The Hendricks suggest self-observation as an antidote to this self-defeating tendency, particularly watching for signs of reactive tension in the body. They also advise that the phenomenon of "pulsation" - or the rhythm of expansion and contraction that characterizes much of physical and energetic phenomena - can somehow be experienced without sacrificing the continuous flow of positive energy. As "co-committed alternatives to the

Upper Limits Problem," the authors suggest certain strategies:

- 1/ Making space, taking space - "time off from closeness to integrate and prepare for moving to the next higher level of intimacy" - or a period of solitude to prevent the loss of the positive energy flow
- 2/ Telling the microscopic truth - this time as a way to preclude the kinds of communications that are unconsciously intended to offend the partner in order to curtail intimate contact
- 3/ Scattering the ash - using deep breathing or movement to dispel the negative reactions (tiredness, a gritty feeling) to too much positive energy and to get grounded again
- 4/ Non-sexual touch - (massage, for example) to reestablish one's physical boundaries (as with #3) and to deepen access to the inner self
- 5/ Turning complaints into requests - to decode and acknowledge one's wants, and express them directly
- 6/ Adopting a healthier belief system - and improving the quality of one's contract with life - asking of oneself: Do my beliefs work? Are they bringing us happiness? - then committing to the belief that one's experience is meant to be happening rather than believing in one's victimhood
- 7/ Repetition of this affirmation: "I am willing to expand continuously in positive energy with totally positive consequences for myself and others."

Although the Upper Limits Problem highlighted here may seem trivial or irrelevant in contrast to the severe issues that often bring couples into counseling, it is important to note that it is not something that occurs only when couples have managed to achieve significantly improved functioning. This difficulty accepting and trusting positive intimate feelings is unfortunately a frequently reoccurring phenomenon throughout the life of a

relationship. Unless the tendency is weakened by the light of awareness and conscious effort, it can distract and deceive people at many points along the way, causing them to feel and act far less comfortable and harmonious together than they might otherwise be. These authors, however, are convinced that habits of human resistance compose the only real upper limit to the potential experience of fulfillment and joy through intimate relationship.

Among many helpful aspects of the Hendricks' approach to relationship transformation is the Co-Committed Problem-Solving Process. The consideration of the following seven specific questions in relation to a particular problem is the central activity, directed less to gaining the answers than to changing consciousness.

1/ How do I feel?

2/ What do I want?

3/ How is the past coloring my present?

4/ What am I getting out of staying stuck?

5/ What do I need to say?

6/ What agreements have I broken?

7/ How can I be of service?

These questions carry the potential to help couples deal with conflict in a way that embodies in action the commitment made in the crucial Step #4, Reclaiming Creativity. That is the taking of 100% responsibility for

creating the way things are, including the problem at hand. The clear objective of having each individual name his or her feelings, wants and needs, and the requirement that each look at the behavior he or she may have contributed to the problem can quickly direct couples away from the hurtful, wasteful, and very common activity of mutual blaming.

Of course, the process of responding to these well-designed questions can be tainted with aggressive antagonism, depending on how the members of the couple choose to share their answers with each other. In relation to this challenge, the authors' suggestions for "Co-Committed Communication Skills" should be applied:

- 1/ Make statements instead of asking questions - risking direct communication of feelings, wants and needs rather than camouflaging will make it easier for one partner to hear the other
- 2/ Say "I" instead of "you" - this characterizes the telling of the microscopic truth, which can only be told about the inner experience of the self - and this keeps both partners better connected with their own feelings
- 3/ Don't use negatives unless they are true - this refers to "I can't" and "you never" or "you always" - and is another caution to stay with the microscopic truth and to assume 100% responsibility for what is happening in the moment
- 4/ Empower instead of rescue - which assumes the other's helplessness and disrespects their strength
- 5/ Respond to direct questions directly instead of sidestepping and redefining the question and changing the subject
- 6/ Don't devalue the other by interrupting them or by using self-denigration to get negative attention

This list brings to awareness the unconscious strategies many couples use to try to "win" their arguments, and counters these tendencies with very specific concrete guidelines that can also be applied in formal therapy sessions.

Another of the strengths of the Hendricks' approach is their thinking about "How to Keep the Past from Intruding on the Present." Here they examine the constricting effects of experiences and beliefs from childhood on current feelings and behavior. "Don't bother asking yourself if the past is influencing your present," they advise. "Assume it is. Simply ask how ... The payoff is enormous." The very nature of the intimate connection, the authors assert, will, because of the positive energy generated, bring up unresolved feelings and issues from the past - in order to provide the opportunity for healing and liberation from them.

Many of us blame our relationship problems on a lack of love, but it is actually the love in the relationship that has brought forth the issues ... A close relationship is a powerful light force, and like any strong light it casts a large shadow. When you stand in the light of a close relationship, you must learn to deal with the shadow. (43)

The shadow is defined here as "the part of us we do not know about" "the hidden repository of all our old feelings and patterns," and is considered to be a part of the self that must be acknowledged and explored by both people for intimacy to develop fully. The key to this

necessary process is "to see and say the truth" - and the alternative course of hiding, withholding, and withdrawing from sharing leads inevitably to the unconscious projection of one's shadow elements onto the partner.

Normal training in social communication does not foster this sort of honesty with oneself or with another. There are many sources of the habit of inner and outer constraint or distortion. Roles developed for survival purposes in relation to the family of origin can persist into adulthood and be especially dysfunctional in intimate relationship, blocking learning and restricting flexibility. Childhood trauma reifies patterns of thought, feeling and action in relation to certain triggering events or situations. Habitual defensive responses such as the general numbing of feelings, in response to authority or criticism, for instance, develop over time and also contribute to the shadow part of the self.

To release themselves from the grip of the past, couples are asked to answer questions that can reveal the "unconscious deals" they may be participating in, such as agreeing to stay stuck in a polarized conflict where no one wins but the uncertainties of growth and change do not have to be faced. They are also challenged to acknowledge the wants and needs they are unconsciously pursuing in "sneaky" ways, and to inquire of themselves how these might be met openly. In order to identify loose ends in their lives

that may be draining energy, initiative and creativity and distorting awareness, another list of questions is offered to both partners:

- 1/ What feelings have I separated myself from?
- 2/ What relationships have I left incomplete?
- 3/ What do I need to do to complete them?
- 4/ What agreements have I broken and not cleaned up?
- 5/ What have I said I would do that I have not done?
- 6/ What have I agreed not to do that I have done?
- 7/ What communications have I left unsaid?
- 8/ What have I started and not finished?
- 9/ To whom do I owe money?
- 10/ Whom do I need to forgive?
- 11/ To whom do I owe appreciation?

Making oneself accountable through answering these questions alone seems likely to hold transformative potential for almost any individual. Sharing this level of self-examination with a partner affords two people the opportunity "to become allies in cleaning up their lives."

Relationship is to learn from, and to enjoy in the process, according to the Hendricks, but as two shadows collide and clash predictably, there are periods of what they call "stuckness." Individual stuckness derives from inner conflict, often between part of the self that seeks growth and change and part that clings to the security of the known, however unsatisfying. Individual impasses

create stuckness in relationships, and the authors choose to focus attention there to free couples to move on. The Stuckness Process requires intimate inquiry into and "being with" one's personal stuckness, again following a particular protocol that elicits awareness of body sensations as well as thoughts, feelings and possibilities for action.

- 1/ Begin by acknowledging to yourself: "I'm stuck." Say it over a few times in your mind.
- 2/ Listen to the tone of voice you are using. Whose voice is it? Yours? Your parent's? Someone else's?
- 3/ Where is the voice coming from? The front of your mind? Side? Back? Just notice - there are no right or wrong answers.
- 4/ Now notice how you experience the feeling of stuckness in your body. Is it a pressure in your chest? A tight neck? Knot in the stomach? Queasiness? Exactly where are the sensations associated with being stuck?
- 5/ What do these sensations remind you of? How is this familiar? With whom are these feelings associated? At what time in your life did they first begin?
- 6/ What do you need to learn from being stuck? What is the message here that you most need to pay attention to?
- 7/ What do you need to do about these feelings of stuckness? Is there someone to whom you need to talk? Are there actions that need to be taken?
- 8/ Who can best support you in attaining real freedom right now in your life? Who can be unflinchingly honest with you, and you with them? How can you get the support you want in becoming free?

The emphasis here again is on taking 100% responsibility - for the stuckness, and for earning whatever reward may lie within it.

In addition to the various questionnaires built into the Hendricks' approach, they offer a number of special exercises corresponding to their Seven Steps to Co-Commitment and designed to be followed in sequence as a roadmap for their "Co-Commitment Program." Among these, the Feeling Map, the Choice Map, Expressing Yourself Fully, the pacing exercise, the completions list (above), the Healing Dialogue, Consciously Taking Space, and Being Present for Feelings stand out as most essential to the work they are promoting and most immediately useful for couples.

The purpose of the Feeling Map is to develop greater awareness of simple emotions and the sensations in the body that accompany them, which can assist couples in their efforts to tell the "microscopic truth." Working with a partner who reads directions (or with audiotaped instructions), the Listener is asked to focus on an experience that holds a particular feeling charge (sad, angry, scared), to call up an associated image, and to notice the physical level of the experience, including their breathing.

The Choice Map is intended to help people practice acknowledging what it is they want by tapping a deeper level of spontaneous knowing. The partner instructs the so-called "choice-maker" in saying "I want" in varied ways and in noticing his or her own inner responses (body

sensations, visual images, feelings and thoughts) in order to be able to move toward naming what is wanted specifically in the relationship.

Expressing Yourself Fully also requires working with a partner who simply receives the spoken reflections of the "communicator." The exercise involves focusing on an emotion and its corresponding physical sensations, intentionally stopping the experience of it in several different ways, and noticing the effects of this contraction. The goal is to build emotional and physical awareness of the difference between cutting off feelings, which happens frequently in couple relationships, and allowing them to emerge to fullness and completion.

What Step Are We Doing? is the pacing exercise which explores the differing "rhythmic preferences" of partners through alternating the positions of leader and follower in the activity of walking at different speeds. Again, the emphasis is on noticing inner responses to the experiences of leading and following, as well as the changes of pace. The intention is to promote awareness of what rhythm feels natural to the self, to ascertain whether it matches the partner's, and if not, to explore reactions to this difference and ways to embrace it in the couple relationship.

The Healing Dialogue incorporates a variation on the Focusing technique developed by Eugene Gendlin - giving

particular attention to feelings that arise in the body in response to questions about a relationship issue. The emphasis is on asking the questions and, instead of listening for thoughts, sensing any shift in body sensation as a cue to the deeper answers needed.

Consciously Taking Space is an obvious and extremely simple strategy to prevent the loss of positive energy when it seems to have run its course. It is the act of leaving one's partner for a period of time acceptable to both - with the express purpose of being alone with oneself. Returning to share with one's partner some of the feelings and thoughts that came up while away can add to the learning that comes from temporary solitude.

Being Present for Feelings is another exercise involving the partner, who repeats the same question in relation to different emotions: "Where do you feel (anger, sadness, joy, etc.) in your body?" The Communicator answers in as much detail as possible while the Partner tries to be empathically present, but noticing his or her real responses and expressing them when the Communicator is done. The challenge is to stay with one's own "microscopic truth" - even when supporting the other's emotional process. In other words, the very worthy goal of this exercise is to practice balancing empathy for the other with empathic attunement to the self.

The Hendricks have developed an array of exercises engaging to the feelings and the bodies as well as the minds of couples who are motivated to try them. Their wholistic approach to the teaching of "conscious loving" potentially deepens individual learning, in addition to eliciting immediate multi-leveled behavioral reinforcement of the recommended steps to "Co-committed" relationship.

Summary

Among the elements these three works have in common is a theory of attraction that involves unconscious criteria based on both positive and negative characteristics of parent-figures. In Hendrix's schema, the "Imago" match containing a sufficient combination of familiar parental traits is recognized by the "Old Brain" in both partners; for Stone and Winkelman, a "positive bonding pattern" arises when each member of the couple experiences on a level out of awareness an adequate fit between child and parent aspects of their personalities; and in the Hendricks' approach, the tyranny of childhood programming determines most attractions and the resultant relationship patterns - replications or reactions against parental forms that create "traps of unconscious loving" - the only antidote to which is becoming conscious. For all, the saving grace of this inevitability is its underlying benevolent purpose: to provide the opportunity for both

benevolent purpose: to provide the opportunity for both people to learn about and heal their childhood wounds and liberate themselves from unconscious defensive patterns that limit their aliveness and humanity.

Each of these works also emphasizes the role of Projection in both initial attraction and the eventual emergence of difficulties in the couple relationship. For Hendrix, each person perceives in the other aspects of the self that were "lost" or "disowned" in childhood in the process of learning how to please caretaking adults; for Stone and Winkelman, elements of the self that were "unacceptable" in childhood are "disowned" and then dictate the very characteristics in another that are most compelling; for the Hendricks, the positive energy of love itself inevitably brings forth the "shadow" or unknown parts of each personality, which have to do with "old feelings and old patterns" and are unconsciously projected onto the other in order to become known to the self.

In attraction, couples are of course focusing at first on the positive aspects which seem to belong exclusively to the beloved and actually reflect hidden parts of themselves. In a later phase of the relationship, the negative aspects of their hidden selves magically and traitorously appear in the other as surprising and painful differences. Although the emergence of the less appealing shadow side of the other invites recognition and, according

to these authors, actually offers each the opportunity for restoration of "original wholeness," the more predictable response is the beginning of a couple's power struggle.

In all three theories, this moment in the development of an intimate relationship is a crucial point at which couples choose either the perpetuation of unconscious patterns or the challenge of using their dilemma to become more conscious and to grow. In Hendrix's approach, it is the time to resist the temptation to blame the partner for problems and to begin instead to reclaim the disowned and projected parts of oneself. For Stone and Winkelman, it is the disowning of (or overidentification with) the Vulnerable Child in each that causes most relationship difficulties, and the trouble, then, provides the wake-up call to take renewed responsibility for one's own feelings and needs, rather than accusing the partner of failing to meet them. The Hendricks also emphasize responsibility for self-examination and identification of unfelt feelings, unmet needs, and "unconscious deals" with the partner or with the self that may be contributing to unnecessary limits on positive energy and relationship satisfaction.

The role of conflict in relationship development is considered essential by Hendrix and by Stone and Winkelman, as a result of moving out of the initial phase of attraction and the feeling of oneness. Hendrix suggests that conflict tends to begin as the couple makes some form

of definite commitment which serves to raise their expectations - primarily that a kind of perfect nurturance neither experienced as a child but both longed for will be provided by the beloved.

Once a relationship seems secure, a psychological switch is triggered deep in the old brain that activates all the latent infantile wishes. It is as if the wounded child within takes over. Says the child, "I've been good enough long enough to ensure that this person is going to stay around for a while. Let's see the payoff. (67)

Simultaneously, the disowned parts of the self that were projected onto the partner and originally appeared highly desirable, now begin to seem overdone and irritatingly different. Dissapointment and then conflict in response to both of these developments are inevitable.

Stone and Winkelman describe a similar process whereby a "positive bonding pattern" (between parent and child parts of each person) changes to a negative one as each partner feels increasingly vulnerable in the relationship and unconsciously relates to the other more and more like a needy child demanding nurturance. In their system, the feelings of insecurity that lead to this shift emerge precisely because of the safety of the positive bond. But because each remains unaware of his or her own Vulnerable Child within and in effect insists that the other take over its caretaking, the Primary Selves of both people reemerge and assert their priorities of power and self-protection.

In this situation, the needy Vulnerable Child of both partners is abandoned by its inner parent, projected onto the other, and then reacted against. Then the parent part of one is trying to control the child part of the other - rather than reassuring its own frightened child part. This tangled development of the negative bonding pattern and the resultant conflict, as disappointing and painful as they can be, are considered necessary in the evolution of a relationship. Because positive bonding patterns, however soothing, lock people into repetitious parent-child interactions and restrict awareness and growth, the movement into a negative and more conflicted form and feeling can serve to awaken new possibilities.

According to the Hendricks, the first stage of relationship development - Romance - is followed by what they call The Inevitable, in which the couple's very closeness causes their individual problems and issues to emerge. But here they depart from the conceptualizations of the other authors, insisting that it is possible to conduct an intimate relationship without conflict. If both people can choose, at the point where difficulties begin, to take full responsibility for inquiring into their own feeling experience and reclaiming their projections, then a "conflict-free" relationship can evolve.

The insistence of the Hendricks that conflict is symptomatic rather than a natural and unavoidable part of

the growth of intimacy distinguishes them from many, if not most, who write about and practice couples counseling. To their credit, they seem to have defined a particular function of conflict that has escaped the notice of many professionals attempting to help couples in theory and practice. This is as a dysfunctional solution to the so-called "Upper Limits Problem" - the difficulty accepting and allowing positive energy to continue flowing between two people without reacting from fear and automatically shutting it down. By highlighting this common tendency, the Hendricks have helped to uncover a secret strategy used unconsciously by many couples to avoid intimacy and ultimately to undermine their chances for deeper satisfaction.

Although several aspects of the authors' approaches to the Inner Child have already been discussed, it is important to note some differences in their definitions and general treatment. For Hendrix, the movement from unconscious to conscious marriage is a process of growing increasingly capable of choosing to relate to the partner from the awareness of an adult rather than that of a child, as to a "passionate friend" rather than to a "surrogate parent." His work with couples is infused with the idea that the unconscious or "old brain" carries throughout life an "infantile perspective" that can always be triggered by emotional hurt, especially by pain from the intimate

partner. A major goal of his program is to help couples internalize an awareness of each other as "wounded children seeking salvation" - in order to foster an understanding of their relationship as a context for the healing of childhood wounds. He does not draw out an actual subpersonality of the Inner Child, but the importance of this part of the self in relationship is always very clear.

Stone and Winkelman do develop the concept of the Inner Child, especially in their original Voice Dialogue Manual, and the role of its Vulnerable aspect is elaborated as essential to the motivation for and pursuit of intimacy. The Vulnerable Child embodies current feelings and needs as well as memories of childhood nurturance, and makes emotional contact possible in relationship. The denial of this part of the self and identification with the power-oriented parental Primary Selves closes the channel through which intimate energy flows. These authors emphasize the need for increasing awareness and acceptance of the disowned Vulnerable Child in each partner, while also cautioning against over-identification with this subpersonality that can result in an equally problematic compulsive victimhood. Their goals for growth and healing in intimate relationship include a loosening of the rigid hold of positive and negative bonding patterns that link the needy child in each to the parent part of the other. They point, in fact, to the development of a conscious

relationship with one's own Inner Child as the major key to individual and couple fulfillment.

The Hendricks acknowledge the power of "childhood programming" to affect the experience of adult relationship in a variety of ways, but do not specifically refer to a part of the self that carries this conditioning. Although they mention "unloved" shadow parts of the personality, and describe "co-dependency" as mutual projection of "childhood issues," they do not include any framing of an Inner Child as one of the disowned elements. The closest they come is in their Healing Dialogue exercise, which introduces the concept of an Inner Self, defined as "the part of you that contains all your original, creative reactions to things" or "how you feel on the inside" - as distinguished from the Outer Self "which is based on what is socially acceptable in our environment." The Inner Self seems to embody some of the elements that correspond to others' notions of the Inner or Vulnerable Child, although these authors do not develop this concept or apply it in any other ways.

Although the Hendricks' approach does very little with this concept, it includes the strongest focus on concrete ways to elicit body awareness, which is often considered an aspect of the Inner Child. The importance of dealing with feelings in relationship is theoretically embraced by Hendrix and by Stone and Winkelman, who emphasize openness to emotional intensity and genuineness

of expression in couples as necessary ingredients for intimacy. But the Hendricks are more specific about body-mind connections and offer lists of physical symptoms of basic feeling states to help couples to know and be able to name their own inner experiences more accurately. In addition, they insist throughout their work that activities involving the body are an essential part of the learning process, and in this interest they have incorporated a physical element in many of their exercises, a particular strength of their approach.

The issue of Gender Difference is generally ignored by both Hendrix and the Hendricks. While each makes reference to the ideal of marital equality - Hendrix in his endnotes suggests that marriage in its latest evolutionary form "based on love and mutual selection requires freedom of choice and gender equality" (my emphasis) - and John Bradshaw in his Foreword to the Hendricks' book claims that they are teaching that "intimacy is only possible when there is a balance of power" - there is no further elaboration of these assertions in either work.

Stone and Winkelman, on the other hand, do explore in a limited way some of the psychological differences between men and women in their Voice Dialogue Manual. Noting men's tendency to disown vulnerability and identify with power, they emphasize the major shift in recent years in women's relationship to previously disowned power-oriented selves.

As an example of a reclaimed part of the female self, they point to the "warrior" capacity for self-protection that has emerged to balance the traditional ideal of self-sacrificing motherhood. The authors also identify the Inner Patriarch as the part of the self that embodies sexist judgments of women, calling it "an inner saboteur who detests women," and warning that disowning this energy will only contribute to its destructive power.

For some reason, most of this analysis is absent from their work on relationships, except in their discussions of Personal and Impersonal Energy and of the Inner Critic, where there are specific brief references to male-female differences in the experience of the inner selves. In particular, they note an early and persistent polarization in social and psychological conditioning. Males are influenced to develop an Impersonal Self or Impersonal Energy - characterized by "(emotional) containment ... holding back more ... (being) more objectively based ... (and able) to separate (oneself) from the feelings and requirements of another human being ... " Their Voice Dialogue Manual names other abilities that manifest with the incorporation of this differentiating energy, such as learning "to think dispassionately" and "to maintain psychological boundaries and operate independently of others, without feeling a need to please or to base their actions on the expected reactions of others."

Females, on the other hand, are steeped in influences that develop a Personal Self or Personal Energy - "a way of being with people that is related, friendly, warm ... (and allows) true contact with the other person ..." Again, the authors' earlier work is more explicit in its description of tendencies fostered by this conditioning (and the expectations embodied in it): "(that women will be) feeling creatures, ever sensitive to the needs and emotions of others ... (maintaining) a feelingful or personal connection to others in all their interactions ... (manifesting) a desire to please ... responsiveness to others ... and (an) ability to nurture."

One of the strengths of Stone and Winkelman is their recognition of these differences in developmental influence and their willingness to acknowledge and incorporate this awareness into their teaching about the inner selves. It is difficult to understand why they have not elaborated the dimension of gender conditioning much more fully in their approach to couples work.

There are commonalities in the three visions of successful relationship that relate in part to a shared emphasis on the process rather than the finished product. Each describes the development of conscious intimacy as a "path" or "journey" - which demands major work at some point to transform would-be power struggles into the food for individual and couple growth, and then needs practice

and on-going attention to reinforce this shift - but requires less and less effort as awareness and mutual empowerment blossom. Hendrix describes conscious marriage as "passionate friendship" and "reality love":

... a state of mind and a way of being based on acceptance, a willingness to grow and change, the courage to encounter one's own fear, and a conscious decision to act in loving ways ... (in which) partners learn to see each other without distortion, to value each other as highly as they do themselves, to give without expecting anything in return, to commit themselves to each other's welfare
 (236-7)

"Binocular" - as opposed to "monocular" - vision is one of the keys that opens the door to this path for couples. This means the on-going willingness to ask sincerely of the partner: "What are you seeing that I am not seeing? What have you learned that I have yet to learn?"

When you accept the limited nature of your own perceptions and become more receptive to the truth of your partner's perceptions, a whole world opens up to you. Instead of seeing your partner's differing views as a source of conflict, you find them a source of knowledge ... Every one of your interactions contains a grain of truth, a sliver of insight, a glimpse into your hiddenness and your wholeness. As you add to your growing fund of knowledge, you are creating reality love, a love based on the emerging truth of yourself and your partner, not on romantic illusion.
 (136-7)

This major shift in awareness and attitude - and the resultant liberated energy - are perhaps the surest signs of being on the path of "conscious loving."

For Stone and Winkelman, committed relationship is "an adventure, a never-ending journey into the unknown" in which success is achieved through a willingness to use the

struggles of intimacy to explore, uncover and take responsibility for the richness and complexity of one's inner selves with a partner who shares this openness and these values. Risk-taking is inherent in this process involving "the baring of our souls," and "surrender to the relationship itself." It is necessary to "recognize that out of this opening (to another) springs an opportunity for a kind of growth not otherwise available to us" - and for both partners to commit themselves to this "co-exploration."

The primary sign of progress on this journey is the emergence of a strengthened Aware Ego in both people. Evidence of this development is increased awareness and a better balancing within each partner of both the vulnerable and powerful aspects of the self. Reclaiming one's own Vulnerable Child and beginning to take full responsibility for its care lessens the tendency to project its feelings and needs onto the other and loosens the grip of the "bonding patterns" on the relationship. As both people learn to acknowledge their projections onto each other as disowned selves needing recognition, their judgments and criticisms diminish, greater mutual vulnerability is possible, and trust and intimacy grow. Changes in consciousness in both people that deepen their communication and sharing sometimes allow them to experience a spiritual connection.

The Hendricks describe a "co-committed" and "co-creative" relationship as "passionate, productive and harmonious," based on "an agreement to become more conscious" and amounting to "a lifetime project." The process requires "being alive to the full range of your feelings, speaking the truth at the deepest level of which you are capable, and learning to keep agreements." They note that although, with practice, "(it) may look like magic, it is really composed of tiny moments of choice."

Choosing to tell the truth. Noticing that you are projecting, and finding the courage to take responsibility. Choosing to feel rather than go numb. Choosing to communicate about a broken agreement. Choosing to support your partner as he or she goes through deep feeling. (39)

Through choosing, over and over again, the responsible behaviors that end power struggles and build commitment, the childhood wounds that naturally arise for both people out of their closeness may be healed, and the limiting and distorting effects of the past can be diminished. As couples face and reclaim the shadows that are revealed by the light of their growing intimacy, they feel less controlled by their childhood programming, and are more free to experience the positive energy flowing between them and to allow it to expand.

In all three approaches considered here, the essential movement that transforms stuck and troubled relationships is a release from imprisoning patterns of unconscious reactivity based on disowned aspects of

vulnerability and power in both partners. The willingness to begin to acknowledge and reclaim these "shadow" parts of the self awakens the real possibility of a collaborative process of conscious loving.

C H A P T E R I I I

SPECIAL ISSUES

Introduction

This chapter will elaborate three special issues integral to couples treatment and to the theoretical integration upon which The Couples Workbook will be based. The preceding Literature Review of selected works on the Inner Child, Gender Difference, and Couple Relationships has yielded one particular thread of commonality. This is the power of the Shadow aspect of human consciousness - its tendency, out of awareness, to distort perception, feelings and experience of self and other - and - its potential, when reclaimed, to contribute to individual and relational healing. Here the concept will be presented more fully, and some methods for exploring the Shadow will be offered.

The Inner Male and Inner Female refer to parts of the self that are expressive of personal and social definitions of masculinity and femininity. Their proportions are usually dictated by gender identity which is determined very early in childhood and accumulates meaning and significance throughout life. Gender-differentiated attitudes and behavioral tendencies that are supposedly beyond cultural conditioning - universal or "archetypal" elements - are often embraced, especially by Jungian theorists, as essential to these conceptualizations. This perspective will be considered in relation to feminist

critiques - which may allow for greater complexity, as well as a more realistic representation of female experience.

The process of Human Development will be viewed through the lenses of three theorists who have provided different maps for its individual, couple and transpersonal dimensions. The orientations of Robert Kegan, Susan Campbell and Ken Wilber are in some ways complementary, and contribute to the theoretical integration to follow.

The Shadow

The concept of the Shadow was referred to by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung early in his writings, developed over the first half of this century through his work, and has since evolved primarily through the theory and practice of his followers. Most broadly defined as the whole unconscious, the term has acquired as its primary meaning the potential and actual aspects of a particular self that are denied, disowned, or otherwise out of that person's awareness. These are the elements that existed within the developing child but did not enhance his or her ability to connect with and fit into the early environment, especially in relation to parental needs and expectations - and therefore were relegated to unconsciousness. As James Hall writes of the Shadow in The Jungian Experience: Analysis and Individuation, "(it) does not imply something evil, but simply refers to what is thrown into the "shade" by that which stands in the "light of consciousness." (19)

In order to understand the Shadow, it is necessary to define its opposite, the conscious counterpart of the Persona - or "mask" - which contains what have been experienced as the acceptable parts of the self. Referred to by Ken Wilber in No Boundary as "a more or less inaccurate and impoverished self-image," (89) the Persona is composed of characteristics and tendencies that are allowed into the light of awareness and match an internal ideal rather than representing a realistic appraisal of the self. John Welwood in Journey of the Heart calls it "the husk of who we are ... an outer shell with no juice, that doesn't allow us to connect deeply with another being." (150) Wilber offers the clearest description of the relationship between the Persona and the Shadow.

... the individual attempts to deny to himself the existence of certain of his own tendencies, such as anger, assertiveness, erotic impulses, joy, hostility, courage, aggression, drive, interest, and so on. But as much as he may try to deny these tendencies, they don't thereby vanish. Since these tendencies are the individual's, all he can do is pretend that they belong to someone else ... So he does not succeed in really denying these tendencies, but only in denying ownership of them. He thus comes to actually believe that these tendencies are not-self, alien, outside. He has narrowed his boundaries so as to exclude the unwanted tendencies ... (which) are therefore projected as the shadow, and the individual is identified only with what's left: a narrowed, impoverished, and inaccurate self-image, the persona. (89)

Bringing to awareness and re-integrating the lost or hidden elements of the personality is considered integral to effective analytical therapy with individuals and

couples. A 1948 lecture by Jung himself - published as part of Aion and later in Psyche and Symbol edited by Violet DeLaszlo (a student of Jung's who taught his theory and practice in England and the USA) emphasizes this importance and its difficulty:

To become conscious of (the Shadow) involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it, therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. (8)

This predictable resistance is usually born of the fear that what has been rejected in the context of the developing self must be entirely unacceptable. However, the Shadow contains positive as well as negative elements, and inevitably includes parts that can contribute significantly to personal growth and actualization, as well as relationship success. As William Miller's The Golden Shadow makes clear, it is "the gold mine of our lives" ... "a source of power and possibility that we can bring into consciousness and use creatively and constructively for a fuller and more enriching experience of life." (ix)

The key to unlocking and reclaiming the treasures of the Shadow is awareness of the phenomenon of projection. This is the process whereby the contents of the Shadow are denied and repressed and then perceived as qualities in others. There is an almost literal meaning to the word since it is as if these ideas, images, and impulses are

thrown onto the environment, like movies onto a screen, and then seem to belong to others, although actually parts of the self. Wilber explains this well in No Boundary:

An impulse ... which arises in you and is naturally aimed at the environment, when projected, appears as an impulse originating in the environment and aimed at you. It's a boomerang effect, and you end up clobbering yourself with your own energy ... (which has) two major consequences ... First, you feel that you completely lack the projected impulse, trait, or tendency. And second, it appears to exist "out there," in the environment, usually in other people.
(92)

This is also a relational process, in that it requires that the other person have just enough of the disowned quality to provide a "hook" on which to hang the projection. For instance, if a person is in denial about his or her own selfish greed for material wealth, he or she may criticize this tendency in another who is, in fact, ruthlessly successful and therefore an easy hook for this projection. Another subtler example might be the person who is out of touch with his or her own emotional needs, and tends to experience even the simple, appropriate and direct expression of feelings by others as overwhelming demands. In this case, since feelings and needs are part of being human, almost anyone could provide a convenient hook for the person in denial about his or her own. In fact, this sort of projection could lead to habitually seeing neediness or emotionality in others, while living in benumbed ignorance about one's self.

The question that inevitably arises in discussions of the Shadow is: How is it possible to bring into awareness that which is by definition unconscious? The first step is to acknowledge a willingness to learn about one's so-called "dark side" - or - as the poet Robert Bly calls it in A Little Book on the Human Shadow, "the long bag we drag behind us." Even the most determined inner pioneer is likely to encounter the resistance mentioned above when venturing into unknown regions of his or her psychic wilderness. Commitment to a process of self-observation and inquiry is required, as well as openness to new ways of thinking about oneself, and courage to face the challenges inherent in this quest. Although it is possible to venture forth alone to meet one's Shadow, a trusted partner or companion is also highly recommended.

There are many clues to the presence of the Shadow, often connected with experiences of emotional intensity. Strong feelings - either negative or positive - in response to qualities in other people often hint at hidden aspects of the self. Whether a reaction is one of admiration, envy or magnetic attraction - or - discomfort, aversion or disgust - it may derive from denied and repressed parts of the self calling for recognition. Reoccurring emotionally charged criticisms - either directed at others, or received from them - can be another reliable source of information about possible projections.

William Miller, in Your Golden Shadow, points to slips of the tongue and slips of behavior as potentially revealing of Shadow elements. When a person says or does something very contrary to their usual character and benevolent intentions, and out slides the precisely wrong word or a strangely incongruous act, these may provide glimpses of the contents of their "long bag."

Compulsive or addictive tendencies are indicators that there are feelings that have been denied or disallowed. Translated into artificial needs for things, substances or activities that offer temporary relief in exchange for a kind of entrapment, these unacceptable elements of the self are likely to exert their powerful influence from the darkness of the Shadow. Jungian analyst Marion Woodman, in Addiction to Perfection, discusses the pursuit of perfection - or the "desire for the pure radiance of light separated from all darkness," as the root of all addictions, and emphasizes the importance of reclaiming the body and the projected dark aspects of the self in order to free oneself from compulsions.

Physical symptoms and dreams are two other avenues to Shadow awareness. Very important information about suppressed feelings and needs or disowned parts of the self can be expressed through the body or in the language of symbolic images. Arnold Mindell, who with Amy Mindell founded Process-Oriented-Psychotherapy, combines these two

elements in the concept of the "dream-body" - and in Working With the Dreaming Body stresses how illness "requires consciousness by creating pain."

In order to become acquainted with the Shadow, it is best to adopt an attitude of readiness with which one can welcome its harbingers in whatever form they emerge. Episcopal priest, Jungian therapist and author Michael Dwinell asserts (in personal communication):

The key issue to remember is that the Shadow encounters us. It is autonomous psychic energy (which) confronts us (and) looms up in front of our faces ... It's as if we were confronted by a god or goddess; it runs us through and through and we feel disturbed, awkward, stupid

With a commitment to exploring one's personal darkness, it is less likely that the emotions this process evokes will cause a fearful retreat - and more possible that they and other reactions can be used for learning and growth.

Inner Male and Inner Female

Gender identity seems to be established by the age of about two years, after which it may be irrevocable and an extremely powerful determinant of life experience.

When the drama of your birth reached its climax, you were promptly greeted with the glad ritual cry, "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" ... The label "boy" or "girl" has tremendous force as a self-fulfilling prophecy, for it throws the full weight of society to one side or the other as the new-born heads for the gender identity fork, and the most decisive sex turning point of all. Parents react differently to the signal "son" or "daughter" from the first moment, and even case-hardened nurses and obstetricians are likely to speak more softly to a newborn baby labeled "girl" and handle her more gently than one who is labeled "boy."

(86-87)

This quotation is taken from John Money and Patricia Tucker's Sexual Signatures: On Being A Man or A Woman, published in 1975. A medical psychologist and director of the psychohormonal research unit at Johns Hopkins University, Money co-founded its Gender Identity Clinic, where hermaphroditic children and adult transsexuals and transvestites are treated. Through his clinical access to individuals of ambivalent or cross-sex identification, he has been able to make a special contribution to general knowledge about both the inner experience and the outer expression of gender difference.

The work of the Gender Identity Clinic has demonstrated in particular that contradictory biological givens - ambiguous physical genital structures and hormones - can be altered to match an individual's inner sense of gender, and the corresponding gender role will evolve. However, fundamental gender identity, resulting primarily from social conditioning in which the primary caretaker (usually the mother) is the chief influence - whether it evolves as feminine, masculine, or intransigently ambivalent - may be virtually set in stone. Although most human beings are predominantly identified with one gender or the other, and are deeply affected by this orientation in all dimensions of life, there is general theoretical and clinical agreement that every person combines elements of both sexes in the make-up of his or her personality.

Jungian analyst June Singer points out in Androgyny: Toward A New Theory of Sexuality (1976) that Jung agreed with Freud on this issue, and on the matter of universally and naturally inherent bisexuality. The two parted ways especially in relation to Freud's absolutist insistence on the importance of sexuality in the generation of neurosis, and his emphasis on bisexuality as at the heart of all psychopathology. Jung's view was radically different, focusing on energy, or complementary masculine and feminine energies, rather than biological sexuality, and regarding bisexuality - or - "androgyny" ...

... as a phenomenon that one should understand,
rather than as a disease that one should try to
cure. (43)

In part to represent this energetic dualism, Jung developed the concepts of Anima and Animus, which refer, respectively, to the unconscious inner female aspect of men and the corresponding inner male aspect of women. The conscious female elements of women and the male elements of men are embodied in various archetypal figures of matching gender. It is, however, in relation to these two complementary inner symbolic representations that Jung's concepts of gender difference are most clearly rendered. The Anima or inner female is associated with an assumed feminine tendency toward feeling rather than thinking, and relational rather than autonomous priorities. The Animus or inner masculine, on the other hand, is characterized

particularly by independence, assertiveness, thinking and opinions, as well as an individual achievement orientation.

June Singer refers to Carl Jung as her "spiritual mentor," and expresses deep gratitude and respect for his contributions to her understanding and ability to help others - while also criticizing his assumptions about the psychology of women as inaccurate and oppressive. She points to his claim that he is defining women's consciousness as different from, but not as inferior to men's. Then she juxtaposes aspects of his (and his female devotees') unaware devaluation of women: e.g., his insistence that a woman must subordinate Animus-related capacities such as intellectual strength or else sacrifice her femininity as well as her potential for a healthy relationship with a man.

Demaris Wehr, in Liberating Archetypes (1987), also appreciates Jung's contributions to human understanding while critiquing ways in which his theory and practice can reinforce women's wounding rather than assisting in healing. Although Jung did not delineate a psychology of women, his discussions of the Feminine and the Anima, according to Wehr, reveal much about his androcentric (male-centered) and sometimes misogynistic stance. She cites as one example a depiction of women who identify with their mothers as: "so empty that a man is free to impute to them anything he fancies ... (and) so unconscious that

(they) suck up all masculine projections; and this pleases men enormously." (107)

What doesn't please Jung is what he calls the "animus possessed" woman. This theoretically refers to the state of a woman who is out of touch with her own inner maleness and therefore entrapped by it and acting it out unawaresly. As with the Shadow, what is disowned goes underground and gains power to influence unconsciously a person's attitudes and behavior. The Animus or inner male, however appealing and valuable its traits are when embodied in men, must be integrated in just the right proportion by women, who, as Singer suggested earlier, will pay dearly for threatening men on their own (thinking) turf. In the abstract, this concept makes sense, but it becomes problematic when male analysts are deciding how much male-styled strength should be integrated by females and how much equals an excess that amounts to "possession."

Wehr also emphasizes the fear of women that comes through Jung's writings, both directly - especially in his lack of empathy for the figure of the mother - and indirectly, as above and below, via his frequent implications about what qualities a woman should or should not embody to fulfill her apparently required feminine role of caretaking a male partner. Continuing the preceding quotation about women's "emptiness" and "unconsciousness" from volume 7 of Jung's Collected Works:

All that feminine indefiniteness is the longed-for counterpart of male decisiveness and single-mindedness, which can be satisfactorily achieved only if a man can get rid of everything doubtful, ambiguous, vague and muddled by projecting it upon some charming example of feminine innocence. Because of women's characteristic passivity, and the feelings of inferiority which make her continually play the injured innocent, the man finds himself cast in an attractive role. (107)

Not only does Jung often drift from his explanations of the Anima into emotionally charged speculations about the nature of woman, but he does so with what seems to be a consistent lack of awareness of his focus on whatever it is about females that can be of service to males.

"Internalized oppression" is the phrase Wehr uses to represent women's inner experience of acceptance of a definition of their primary value in terms of their capacity to serve the interests and needs of men. This is the common result of absorbing the sexism or "androcentrism" that is inherent in almost all social institutions in our world today. In the realm of the Inner Male and Inner Female, internalized oppression translates into tendencies to over-value maleness and under-value femaleness - in either gender - and to be generally unaware or at least accepting of external oppression.

The primary problem with Jung's conceptualization of Inner Male and Inner Female might be summarized as a lack of reflexive coherence. While he is ostensibly making a case for the importance of the integration by both genders of the contrasexual elements embodied in these archetypes,

his unconsciousness about his own gender bias leads him to reflect his culture's devaluation and restriction of the feminine - and thereby to contradict his intended message. In addition, his over-emphasis on the "negative animus" and the dangers of Animus possession for women are constant reminders that pleasing and not frightening men might well be higher priorities for female psychological well-being than the benefits of integration of the inner male.

As Demaris Wehr writes - in the context of strong praise for Jung's spiritual orientation, his challenge to the concept of "pure objectivity," his integration of Eastern and Western perspectives, and his willingness to confront hard questions, including the problem of evil:

With his unexamined acceptance of male-generated gender-related images, Jung has dealt primarily with the inner world of the male and its projections.
(126)

Attention to the impact of the social context in which men and women are embedded and archetypal images evolve reveals that Jung's conjectures about femininity and the nature of the Inner Female need, as Wehr notes, correction by incorporation of more of women's inner experience.

Jung validates womanhood in certain important ways, even recognizing dangers to the human species of the neglect and disowning of feminine qualities. He also, unfortunately, elevates these social and psychological definitions of the feminine to the status of the sacred by

associating the archetypes with what he calls the "numinous." His theoretical insistence that in women Eros, the principle of relatedness, and in men Logos, the analytical principle, must dominate, reifies these images and unwittingly - as Wehr writes, "reinforces women's difficulty in claiming their right to authority and empowerment" and "undermines women's feeling of self-worth in themselves."

In Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought (1985), scholars Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht build on the work of others to propose a "re-visioning" of archetypes, including and especially Anima and Animus. By this they appear to mean removal of the "absolute or transcendent or unchanging" aspect, and a shift to regarding the archetype "not as an image whose content is frozen but ... as a tendency to form and re-form images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences." (13-14) This stance can free theorists and therapists to notice, develop and work with their clients' and their own current understandings of the Inner Female and the Inner Male, without imposing simplistic, restrictive and culture- or gender-dependent definitions.

Processes of Development

Awareness of developmental processes can be of great assistance on any of our human journeys, whether it is the adventure of individual evolution from infancy to maturity to old age, the heart-risking passages that lead from falling-in-love to "co-committed and co-creative" loving (Hendricks and Hendricks), or the transformative inner odyssey out of conditioned limitations toward the known and unknown possibilities of higher consciousness. For instance, it is most helpful to the new parent to be aware that his or her two-year-old will very likely need to fiercely resist direction because he or she is two years old - and not because of a failure in parenting. When the parent communicates a level of acceptance of this developmental need to the child, the child and parent are more likely to move through this oppositional phase as gracefully as possible, each with increasing confidence in his or her growing competencies.

Likewise, it is usually an enormous relief to couples to learn that their relationship is necessarily experiencing a phase of development that is somewhat inevitable and often difficult - so that they do not mistakenly assume some personal inadequacy is causing the trouble and flounder in the hopelessness of blaming self, other, their blighted union, or the institution of marriage.

Theories of individual development have tended to emphasize movement from fusion to increasing differentiation or individuation and autonomy via certain predictable stages punctuated by particular maturational events. Until recently, the relational matrix necessary for development was an undervalued given, a context in which important events happened and progress was or was not achieved and from which some sense of self emerged. Although Erikson and Object Relations theorists in particular have emphasized the on-going importance of "self-other constructions" (Kegan, 7), their perspective has still been skewed toward the end-products of developmental progress. In the past decade-and-a-half certain researchers, theorists and clinicians, especially feminists considered in Chapter II, have begun to provide a less deterministic and less linear perspective on development, more focused on the relational matrix and more process-oriented.

Robert Kegan in The Evolving Self (1982) offers a framework for understanding development that attempts to integrate the earlier dominant emphasis with this newer awareness through conceptualizing life-long cycles into and out of "embeddedness" in relationship. Movement through these cycles requires the generation of alternating pulses of differentiating and integrative energies. The intensity of these energies and the pace of development are

individually determined by nature and by the nurture of the relational matrix. Developmental "success" is measured in terms of the evolving capacity to make meaning of experience through this on-going dialectical process of discovery of what is self and what is other. "'Person' is understood to refer as much to an activity as to a thing - an ever progressive motion engaged in giving itself a new form." (7-8)

The earlier focus of Stone Center developmental theory, referred to in Chapter II, was the "Self-in-Relation." Current terminology distances further from the concept of self as object-related and reflects a greater awareness of reciprocity in the developmental process. The Stone Center's "Movement-in-Relation" seems to embrace Kegan's sense of the on-going activity of self-and-other-discovery, while introducing an emphasis on mutuality that is integral to the view of development as essentially relational throughout the life cycle.

Theories of couple relationship development usually include an initially more-or-less fused stage followed by progress through the emergence of differences and a power struggle to a more individuated state. From the above perspectives, there are then two evolving processes making meaning of self and other through their relational matrix while balancing openness and boundaries on the journey of individual and couple fulfillment. In other words, couples

can anticipate an on-going evolution through increasingly refining co-created forms of relatedness, rather than a progressive mastery of tasks or levels leading to a developmental destination of individual or couple maturity.

Clinical psychologist Susan Campbell offers a map of the process of relationship development in The Couple's Journey: Intimacy as a Path to Wholeness (1980). In her conceptualization, couples move from the initial stage of attraction or Romance to an inevitable emergence of differences and Power Struggle. When both partners have accepted the necessity of dealing with their own inner conflicts and unresolved childhood issues, they can progress to Stability. They may temporarily detour into the Illusion of Peace as the intensity of the power struggle has abated and the temptation to avoid conflict at all costs arises. But in pursuit of consciousness, they move into Commitment, where both take responsibility for making the relationship work, and they enjoy finding collaborative solutions to their problems. If they make it to Co-Creation, they come into right-relationship with the larger world, as well as themselves and each other, opening to a sense of purpose in their relationship that reaches beyond their own personal fulfillment.

Ken Wilber presents his map of transpersonal development in No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth (1979). Calling his formulation "the

spectrum of consciousness," he describes a progression in the evolution of the sense of self and not-self through five major levels of identity.

Beginning with the level of Persona and Shadow, the boundary between self and not-self excludes even aspects of one's own mind, until the contents of the Shadow begin to be confronted and integrated. The next level of the spectrum is the Ego or Centaur level, where re-claiming the body from projection leads to the strengthening of consciousness and greater self-actualization.

Deeper still is the level of "the total organism," which begins to involve what he calls the "transpersonal bands" of experience where human awareness embraces the sense of something transcendent beyond energy or form. Finally there is the ultimate experience of oneness, "no-boundary" or "unity consciousness," or identification with the All - for which there is no path because it cannot be attained by willing, yet the paradox exists that some form of discipline can actually help to prepare the way.

Meditation training is suggested as one form of effort that may promote developmental progress in the transpersonal realm. But this recommendation is qualified by Wilber's caution against making a goal of movement toward unity consciousness or enlightenment. Practice of meditation or mindful attention to the present moment creates the conditions for the experience of "big mind" -

and is itself a "joyful and grateful expression of original enlightenment." Once again, and ultimately in relation to each of the issues highlighted in this chapter - the Shadow, the Inner Male and Female, and Development - awareness holds the key to transcendence - and the path is, in reality, the destination.

C H A P T E R I V

THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

Therapy with couples is necessarily, at least in part, an educational process. In addition to skills like communication and conflict resolution, we are teaching ideas about relationship that will help to heal their current wounds and hopefully will also help to guide them through future rough times that they will be able to manage on their own. We are teaching people to be less afraid of the challenges inherent in building a couple relationship, to be less judgmental of themselves and more accepting of their developmental process, and to understand that committed intimate partnership brings people to the edge of their comfortable known selves and holds a mirror to unknown and partly unwelcome aspects of the self.

This is the Shadow, "the long bag we drag behind us," as poet Robert Bly describes it, full of the parts of our developing selves parents and community didn't approve of. An important part of the Shadow-self is usually the wounded aspect of the Inner Child, neglected and disowned for its neediness and vulnerability, and needing to be contacted, reclaimed and nurtured. Many people enter couple relationships unconsciously looking for someone to care for this hidden and devalued part of themselves - which will be activated in the warmth of the loving connection and will make itself known or at least felt with great impact sooner or later. Unless both members of a

great impact sooner or later. Unless both members of a couple commit themselves to acknowledging, accepting and taking responsibility for the child within, each for his or her own, a mutually co-dependent arrangement will inevitably develop in which each is trying on some level to seduce or coerce the other into doing it instead. The price of this abdication can include distortion of each individual's sense of self, as well as loss of the couple's capacity for intimacy.

This is a crucial event in the evolution of a couple relationship - when difficulties emerge and the woundedness of childhood is revivified. At this point the Inner Child, who once felt received, held and comforted in the arms of the beloved other, feels invaded or abandoned - and is, in fact, re-deposited in the relative safety of the Shadow. The loving Inner Parent to that vulnerable child within, having been projected onto the partner, also retreats to the Shadow when the partner no longer provides an adequate "hook" - returning to its usual status as another one of the disowned selves.

What are then projected are the insecure and demanding version of the Inner Child, and the neglectful or even abusive Inner Parent, since the couple's opposition certainly allows the partner's hooks to readily carry these projections. Thus begins the Power Struggle stage of relationship, as Susan Campbell has aptly described it,

which is an existential invitation to the couple to awaken to the reality of the Shadow selves of Inner Child and Inner Parent in each of them, to learn about the richness of their resources and vulnerabilities and the extensive influence of the dynamics between them on efforts to connect and relate intimately.

Both the challenges and the possible resolutions of this stage involve the differentiation of parts of the self. In addition to the Inner Child and Inner Parent in their various aspects, the dimensions of maleness and femaleness, or masculinity and femininity, impact on the quality of the developing relationship. These elements exist not only within the individual members of the couple and between them, but also in a social context that is imbued with a particular form of distorted hierarchical thinking that values one gender over the other.

Institutionalized sexism is a part of humanity's collective Shadow that weighs heavily on all efforts to build loving and intimate partnerships. In The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future (1987), scholar-futurist-activist Riane Eisler traces the roots of this widespread debilitating prejudice to ancient historical phenomena. The existence for thousands of years, during the Neolithic period of human evolution, of culturally and technologically advanced societies which had no rigid social divisions, forms of oppression or war, has recently

been documented through archeological finds and radio-carbon dating. Neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, these were goddess-worshipping communities where women and men lived cooperatively in apparent mutual respect and harmony.

Eventually, these peaceful, agrarian-based "Partnership" societies were taken over by invading nomadic hords which imposed a new "Dominator" form of social organization based on authoritarian rule. From this period onward to the present day, human differences have been assigned a hierarchical value, beginning with and founded on male dominance over females. The divisive practice of ranking has extended to all criteria for social groupings from families to neighborhoods to nations - and including races, ethnicities, classes, creeds, ad infinitum.

According to Eisler, the basis for all forms of social inequality is the denigration of females and the feminine, which originated with the violent conquest of ancient egalitarian Partnership societies. The replacement of the life-giving chalice with the death-dealing blade is the symbol of a fundamental shift in human orientation - from an integrative wholistic appreciative attitude toward diversity to an adversarial and competitive stance.

Unfortunately, most couples continue to struggle to build intimate and fulfilling partnerships under the influence of this ancient antagonism, using a framework and mindset that inevitably derive from Dominator conditioning.

Concepts of marriage and family, along with every other social institution, have evolved out of this systematic over-valuing of males and masculinity and under-valuing of females and femininity. Dominator assumptions have distorted the very base of knowledge on which the social structure rests and out of which progress grows - including, as has been discussed in Chapter II, the fields of psychology and human development.

In Chapter III this phenomenon has been partially documented in relation to Jungian theory, which offered the world useful conceptualizations of masculine and feminine energies, then erred by claiming universality for these definitions. Divorcing these ideas from their human origins in time and space and culture and associating them with a sense of sacred order served to reinforce what might be called, in gratitude to Eisler, their "Dominator" potential. By acknowledging the inherent and unconscious gender bias that contributed to the formulation of Jungian analysis, its key concepts can be considered for their practical usefulness within realistic limitations that preclude their becoming oppressive standards of gender differentiation.

The gendered concept of the Inner Child evolved out of these concerns as a way to integrate into awareness and to represent concretely the clinically effective four-force framing of the Inner Child with a systemic awareness

of socialized differences and Dominator bias, including gender and the inevitability of sexism in relationships between women and men. By offering a personal image that incorporates a full range of potential human hurts and wholeness - from the patterns of emotional reactivity based in childhood wounding that can yield to psychodynamic analysis, to the learning deficits that can be corrected by cognitive-behavioral intervention, to the relational impairments that respond to humanistic-existential empathic presence, to the spiritual alienation that can be transformed through transpersonal experience - the Inner Child provides a multi-layered vehicle for healing and accessing resources through many varied approaches.

What has been missing from this invaluable psychotherapeutic instrument, from this author's perspective, has been the systemic dimension. As stated in Chapter I, the word "systemic" is used here in its recently evolved meaning, which refers to the inclusion of both intra- and inter-personal facets of being and doing, as well as the impact of the social/political context on problems and possible solutions. Applied as a neutral or only incidentally gender-identified concept, the Inner Child has still proven itself powerful and useful as a clinical tool in formal therapy, and with immense popular appeal for individual self-improvement. With the addition of the systemic dimension, more of individual reality can

be addressed through this framework, and its potential for use with couples can be more fully explored.

The Inner Boy and the Inner Girl - for the purposes of The Couples Workbook in Chapter V - are here described as positive Shadow aspects of the Inner Child - in terms of their integrated capacities for both autonomous and relational functioning. Gender difference has been characterized in Chapters II and III as increasingly distinct along these lines throughout development. The logical result of such conditioning is an intense polarization of adult males and females, represented here by the gender-differentiated Inner Parents - "Dominator-Dad" and "Monster-Mom" - elements corresponding to restrictive sex-role stereotypes that may reside to varying extents in either the Persona or the Shadow.

Dominator-Dad is the internalization of male conditioning to value distance and control over emotional openness, action over talk, independence over connectedness or closeness. Dominator definitions of masculinity require hierarchical thinking and a certain vigilance about status in relation to others to preserve one's manhood. Dominator-Dad obviously interferes with the development of intimate relationship, since the top priority of this subpersonality is the continuous maintenance of at least a protective appearance of manliness. Family therapist Frank Pittman, in Man Enough: Fathers, Sons, and the Search for

Masculinity (1993), calls this "the obsession of masculinity" and "the secret passion of men."

Fortunately, the experience of many men also includes a period of boyhood intimacy, usually with mother, and the beginnings of the development of positive relational attitudes and skills before Dominator conditioning requires a turning away from this bond. The urge for closeness, the capacity for openly feeling and needing and expressing - and the experience of empathy and mutuality have a chance to bud, at least, before masculinity training takes hold and changes a boy's priorities. This Inner Boy is contained within each man and embodies the capacities for connection that Dominator conditioning denies him.

Monster-Mom is the internalization of the traditional gender role in women, expert in empathizing with everyone else's feelings but her own. Under the Dominator system of human relations, females are conditioned to assume responsibility for the health and well-being of their relationships, especially with an intimate partner, as their primary activity in life. This subpersonality skews women always in the direction of service to and submersion in the concerns of others, and away from the possibility of straightforward pursuit of autonomous personal goals.

The Inner Girl - again for the purposes of The Couples Workbook - is the part of the female self that is not yet tainted with Dominator conditioning, although when

she appears in an older version, she will assume a more ambiguous and restricted form. A positive Shadow-side of women, her life is an integrated pursuit of competencies and pleasures, some relational and some individual, with no torturously compelling distinctions between the two.

These images of the Inner Male and the Inner Female are conjectured and offered for their potential usefulness in concretizing the systemic dimension of the Inner Child for use in therapy with couples and individuals. They are theoretical constructs that allow the expression of certain aspects of the experience of many women and men that have not been fully represented through the concept of the Inner Child without gender-identification. The Inner Boy and Inner Girl can allow for more specific differentiation in orientation to the inner and outer worlds of both sexes, from the less guarded perspective of a child. In addition, certain wounds from childhood originate and occur because of sexism and forms of Dominator influence, and have particular effects that are gender-specific which may be conveyed more easily through contacting a gendered version of the Inner Child.

One of the most compelling aspects of the Inner Child in individual therapeutic work has seemed to be the willingness of clients to find largely untapped reserves of self-empathy through building a relationship with the child within. It is apparently easier to understand and forgive

one's child-self for developing adaptive strategies for survival that turned into sources of difficulty in adult life than it is to directly relate with compassion to the adult self. In couple relationships in this author's practice, the same tendency has appeared - in individuals toward themselves and toward each other.

Because the institutionalized power differences of sexism put an unconscious and usually automatic wedge between men and women trying to relate intimately, there can be an invaluable route to mutual empathy through accessing the boy and girl within who existed before they were conditioned antagonists. The enhancement of a differentiating awareness of self and other in relation to the effects of childhood wounds and gender conditioning, as well as the integration of a process-orientation toward individual and couple development, can greatly assist couples in their efforts to achieve intimate, vital and enduring relationships.

Differentiation and amplification of vulnerable and powerful parts of the self and the other occur through a focused exploration requiring a stance of non-judgmental observing and acceptance. The resulting strengthened Aware Ego also tends to decrease emotional reactivity that results from overidentification with subpersonalities - while increasing identification with this capacity for compassionate Witnessing or mindfulness. The practice of

mindfulness has been likened to recovering "beginner's mind" or a child-like freshness and openness of experience and perception. This essential activity in reclaiming the Inner Child - learning to attend to one's immediate inner experiencing - enhances feelings of connectedness with self and others - including one's intimate partner - and also embodies the attitudinal shift that can release transpersonal potentials.

C H A P T E R V

THE COUPLES WORKBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Couples Workbook.

This workbook is intended to be helpful to you if you are in a couple relationship that is having problems and you want a structured self-help approach - something to use with your partner or with the support of a counselor or on your own to try to make things better. It is directed primarily to committed couples, those who, whether legally married or not, see themselves as a two-person team living collaboratively and trying to build a future together. The workbook will also be more relevant and useful to you if the sexual dimension of your relationship is monogamous - shared only with your partner and not open to multiple involvements.

Although the focus here is definitely on committed and monogamous couplehood, primary relationships that do not fit that definition or any peer relationship of some intimacy and importance - with a lover, friend or relative - is likely to benefit from this approach to dealing with on-going struggles. While there is, of course, even greater chance for improvement when both members of the relationship work through part or all of this book, the efforts of just one person can have profound and lasting positive effects.

The Couples Workbook does not attempt to be comprehensive in its approach to relationship problems. Instead, the focus here is specifically on helping couples to look at themselves more clearly and directly in terms of two distinct and interwoven areas of concern: the so-called "Inner Child" and the effects of gender conditioning.

The Workbook starts from the assumption that efforts at intimate relationship are generally inhibited by self-protective patterns that developed in both people as responses to hurtful childhood experience. In addition, each couple labors to love under the distorting and draining weight of sexism, which has historically interpreted gender difference from a "Dominator" mindset in terms of female inferiority and male superiority, fueling a seemingly endless "war between the sexes." These twin burdens severely restrict and hamper the possibility of equal and truly intimate connection between men and women. In this workbook, couples are invited to consider in a variety of ways how they and their relationships have been and continue to be affected by these powerful internal and external influences. Couples are also challenged to imagine, feel, think, act and grow to free themselves to experience a far less encumbered and potentially transformative "Partnership Way."

The Couples Workbook is divided into sections that consist of brief discussions of key ideas as well as exercises, checklists and questions to answer about yourself, your partner, and your relationship that will hopefully help you to clarify problems as well as resources for moving toward solutions. Many of these exercises suggest that you write responses immediately following the instructions. You may want to routinely photocopy these pages before writing on the lines provided. This will provide extra space for your partner's responses, if needed, and will also allow you to easily repeat activities at some point in the future, if desired. There are a few guided visualizations included, which can be done alone or with a partner by alternately reading to each other - or - you might want to tape record the directions and play them back for a more relaxed approach or a shared experience.

We begin with questions that will allow you to take a step back from the challenges of your partnership in order to think of yourself and your connection with your partner in a more neutral way than you are probably used to doing. There can be immediate advantages in diminishing somewhat the emotional intensity so often triggered in intimate conflicts by becoming a student of your relationship. A brief shift into the role of an outsider looking in to consider your shared history, particular resources and vulnerabilities may enhance your ability to see your

current relationship problems more clearly and specifically. In addition, the developmental perspective afforded by Susan Campbell's map of the process of the "Couples Journey" can help to brighten your view.

Next the popular concept of the Inner Child is introduced. Offering ways to begin to draw out the rich resources of this intensely alive part of the self, we explain some of its importance to individuals, as well as its relevance in couple relationships. The roles of two other parts of the self, the Inner Parent and the Aware Ego, are defined and explored in relation to the Inner Child. We also offer answers to questions many couples bring to counseling: who really needs help? Is it you, or your partner, or parts of each of you - or this unique entity you have created together - The Relationship - or some or all of the above? And who is the helper? Or who is responsible for helping whom, and how?

The "Treasures of the Shadow" are many, usually including aspects of the Inner Child, as well as gender-typed traits or tendencies that contrast with our conscious sense of self. In this section, we help you bring to light some of these elements, with the goals of expanding your self-awareness and self-acceptance, and promoting greater empathy for whatever you consider to be "not-me" or "the other" - as it appears in yourself and in your partner.

In "The Chalice and the Blade" we borrow from Riane Eisler's book of the same name her symbolic expression for gender difference, as well as her historical analysis of the origins of sexism. We also look briefly at how psychological theories about female development have evolved in the direction of better representing the actual experience of women, and of men. Here our intention is to help you to grasp the profound implications for present-day society and for intimate relationships of the former existence of a "Partnership" form of social order where males and females lived in equality and harmony. We contrast this ancient model with the oppressive hierarchical "Dominator" form that conquered and replaced it, and from which our understandings of psychology and gender difference developed. Here you are encouraged to re-consider your intimate relationship in light of this evolution.

In "The Inner Girl and the Inner Boy" we introduce the concept of the gendered Inner Child, describing some of the positive and negative Shadow elements of each. Our focus is on some of the effects of Dominator conditioning specifically on inner parent/child dynamics between men and women. Then in "The Partnership Way for Couples" we invite you to look at your relationship a little more closely in terms of Dominator and Partnership elements, especially in the areas of collaboration, communication, and conflict

resolution. There may be as many definitions of successful couplehood as there are couples, and a good percentage of them probably have nothing to do with gender difference or the Inner Child. This section is also intended to assist you in clarifying your own image of satisfying relationship, in light of the dimensions we have highlighted here - as well as offering some practical suggestions to support you in moving individually and together to realize your vision.

Finally, there is "An Open Letter to Couples Counselors" - directed to yours, if you have one - and also addressed to the concerned therapist who is wondering if The Couples Workbook might be helpful to his or her clients. In this there is a description of goals and processes incorporated here, as well as minimal guidelines for using the Workbook as an adjunct to formal counseling.

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## The Couple You Are, The Couple You Were

### Taking A Step Back

Here at the beginning of this workbook your first challenge is to describe yourself and your partner as objectively as possible, pretending for a short time that you are a magazine or television interviewer with the goal of researching some basic and indisputable facts about these two very important people. Each of you should do this description separately, in the third person, using "he" "she" and "they" rather than "I" "you" and "we." It may feel strange or awkward at first, but this temporary shift in your frame of reference can contribute to an easing of some of the tensions that perpetuate relationship difficulties. The following questions can be used as guidelines for gathering the necessary initial information about this familiar and beloved couple who needs help, and about their families and support systems.

1/ What are their full names, birthdates, birthplaces, and ages?

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2/ What are their occupations, positions, and how long have they been in them?

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3/ What are their educational levels, degrees, certificates, and fields of study or job training?

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4/ How much money does each of them earn per year, including paid work, child support, alimony, state aid, investment income, trust funds, and predictable gifts?

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5/ Do they live together, where, and for how long?

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6/ Who owns the property (or properties) they live in, and who pays the rent or mortgage?

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7/ Are they married? Legally? Through a religious or spiritual ceremony? By common law? Have they expressed a mutual commitment to a long-term relationship with each other without getting married?



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8/ Have they been married or in a long-term committed relationship before? More than once? With whom and for how long? When and how did it end? (a simple explanation)

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9/ Do they have children? Are they theirs by birth, adoption, marriage or other commitment (i.e., foster-step- )? From this relationship or a previous one? What are their ages, grades in school, (occupations for adult children), and where do they live? Who, if anyone, shares the parenting of them - the current partner, or someone else? If there are no children, is this because of a conscious decision, infertility, conflict or indecision?

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10/ Are their parents living, and if so, what are their names, where are they, and how often do they see them? With their partner? Alone? (If they are not living, when did they die and what did they die of?)

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11/ Have their parents ever been separated or divorced? If so, how long ago, and have they remarried? For how long?

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12/ What are the names and ages of their siblings? Where do they live, what are their occupations, and are they currently in committed relationships? If so, for how long, and do they have children? How often do they see each sibling? With their partner? Alone?

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13/ Are there any other relatives they have contact with who are important to them? Who are they, where do they live, and how often do they see them? Alone? With their partner?

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14/ Who are their most frequently visited friends? Do they see them as a couple, or as individuals? How long have they known them, and how often do they have contact with them?

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### Love Stories

Now that you have collected some of the facts about the couple in question, your next assignment also involves writing, but this time from the perspective of an artist, with a little more leeway for self-expression. Each of you is invited to pretend you are making a movie about your own love story, and again describe yourself and your partner in the third person, but now focusing on how the relationship began and what drew these two people together - in a brief paragraph that starts with: "Once upon a time ... "

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Continuing with this story for the movie, each of you add your own explanation of how the lovers came to be tangled or stuck, again using "she" "he" or "they" to describe what happened in your separate versions.

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### The Way It Was

Shifting back to your journalist roles, the task for each of you now is to gather some historical information about what the lives of these two people were like when they met and got involved. Do this exercise separately, without consulting each other, and see what you remember. Some questions to guide you:

1/ Where were they living, and with whom, when they met?

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2/ How were they earning a living?



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3/ How long had it been since their last relationships ended?

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4/ Was the previous relationship a committed one? If so, what kind of commitment had been made? How long did it last?

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5/ Had there been any major disruption, loss, or difficulty in either of their lives close to the time of their meeting?

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6/ Had either person been using drugs or alcohol excessively?

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7/ What were the major responsibilities of each at the time?

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8/ What were the major sources of stress for each?

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9/ What were the major sources of support for each?

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10/ What attracted them to each other? What qualities did each see in the other as strengths or resources?

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11/ What was each hoping for in a partner?

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12/ What was their shared vision of relationship? What elements were the most important for them as a couple?

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13/ What were the parts of the relationship that were most valuable and important to each of them as individuals?

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## Picturing Your Problems, Seeing Your Strengths

### If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It: Guided Imaginings

Now that you have done some initial information-gathering about The Couple You Are and The Couple You Were, the next section will focus on identifying both the problem areas and the strengths of your relationship. At this point, you may want to pause and take at least a few minutes to look over what you've already done, each reviewing only his or her own responses. Continuing to work separately for now will help to untangle your experiences of the relationship, and will contribute to your possibilities for a fresh and healing new perspective.

When you have finished your review, go back to Questions 10, 11, 12, and 13. Re-read your answers to these questions again. Then, sitting as comfortably as possible, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling as fully as you can to begin to relax yourself. Slowly tighten the muscles of your lower body - your feet, ankles, calves, thighs, genitals, and buttocks - and then let them go limp. Moving up your body, tighten the muscles around your upper half - your torso, shoulders, arms, hands, neck and face - holding them briefly, then letting them go. Breathe deeply again a few more times.

Now picture in your mind the first time you remember being attracted to your partner - recalling where you were

if you can, and seeing him or her in as much detail as possible. Holding this image in your mind for a moment, recall the feelings of that time, and notice your body's sensations as you are remembering. Allow memory of the different levels of your early attraction to this person to emerge, feeling yourself drawn to them in mind, body and feelings ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and write down a description of your remembering experience.

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Returning to your comfortable position, close your eyes again, take a few more deep breaths, and then bring back the early sensing of your partner and allow it to be softly in your mind. As you are holding this image and feeling, recall your excitement in this person's presence and your imaginings about what a relationship with her or him would be like, letting the delightful fantasies and hopes of new beginnings come back for a momentary visit ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and write down your recollections.



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Now, closing your eyes and relaxing yourself once more, and recalling your earlier positive feelings for your partner - check your memories for the earliest sensing of the potential for difficulty in your relationship ... What were your first anxious or uncomfortable feelings about your partner? ... When did your first doubts or fears arise about the relationship? ... Where were you and what was happening when you first felt even slight misgivings or concern about whether or not it was working? ... Recall the scene in your mind's eye, if possible, and the interaction between you, letting the feelings and sensations in your body come into your awareness ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and write this down.

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Returning once more to your relaxed state, taking three very deep breaths and then letting yourself breathe easily and naturally, reconnecting with your earliest memory of concern for your relationship - now allowing your mind to time-travel forward to the first major misunderstanding or disagreement you can remember ... Noticing where and when this came to pass, bringing as much detail as possible into the picture. As the scene unfolds, recalling your sense of disappointment and being aware of any other feelings that might arise ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and write this down.

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Now relaxing yourself again, settling into your chair once more, closing your eyes and breathing deeply, then breathing gently and easily, letting go, relaxing more - now allowing your mind to time-travel forward again, this time all the way up to your most recent conflict with your partner - bringing into your awareness an image of the two of you locked in disagreement about some issue, intensely

focused on some problem in your relationship. Keep breathing as you recall the place and the time and the interaction in as much detail as possible, holding this picture in your mind, and letting the feelings and body sensations come into your awareness ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes, and write down your experience.

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One more time calming your mind and body by closing your eyes and breathing, breathing in and out as deeply as is comfortable for a minute or two, then allowing your breath to assume its own rhythm, and just resting easily and settling and clearing ... You will soon be invited to answer a question, a question that has no right or wrong answer, and whatever comes up in your awareness will be helpful to your process here, so you can write whatever comes to your mind ... The question is this: What is your deepest sense of the major problem in your relationship? When you are ready, slowly open your eyes, and write down your thoughts.

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Returning again to relaxation, closing your eyes and easing yourself back into breathing, first intentionally and deeply, then softening into a quiet and natural pacing, settling and clearing, deepening and softening, letting go and melting into your chair, slowing down and becoming very still and easy ... returning in your mind to the last time you and your partner were close and comfortable together, letting this memory come in as much detail as possible, where you were and what you were doing, recalling the good feelings in your mind and your body, letting this experience fill your awareness ...

You will soon be invited to answer questions that have no right or wrong answers, and any answer you give will be helpful to your process here, so you can respond easily with anything that comes to your mind. The questions are these: What are the positive parts of your relationship that make you willing and wanting to work through its problems? What are the strengths and the joys of your relationship that make your efforts worthwhile? When you are ready, slowly open your eyes, and write down your thoughts.



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\*\*\* Be sure to take a break of at least a few minutes before going on to the last part of this chapter. \*\*\*

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Susan Campbell's Map of the Couple's Journey

One of the most helpful traveling companions for almost any journey is a map of the territory. Intimate relationship is a journey, like climbing a mountain or crossing an ocean, but perhaps more challenging than any other because there is always an uncharted universe to explore which is created by each new set of partners. The uniqueness of the partnership generates an original and unknown landscape - and the life of the relationship is the process of its invention and investigation.

Fortunately for couples, although the content and scenery, the time-frame and depth of experiencing on each particular partnership path usually cannot be accurately anticipated, the process of intimate journeying has some predictable twists and turns. Susan Campbell is a clinical psychologist and couples therapist in the San

Francisco Bay Area of California who has created a map of this process in a book she calls The Couples Journey. Her formulation will be presented here and incorporated into an exercise that can help you and your partner to understand how relationships develop and where yours might be in its evolution. Although "the map is never the territory," it can be a crucial aid in wresting order from chaos and in better orienting confused couples to the unchangeable past, the unseeable future, and alternative views of the ever-present now.

The five stage "Couples Journey Map" begins with Romance, the stage of initial attraction, interest, and excitement - when positive feelings are strong and hopes are high. Each partner sees the other in a glowing light and feels whole and complete in his or her presence. There is a sense of complementarity and a feeling of a "perfect fit." Their intertwining dance is flowing and harmonious and seems it always will be. There is a shared intuition about possibilities for fulfillment, and inspiration to create and achieve a mutual vision. There is also a tendency to want to preserve the seamless unity of this stage, which often translates into an automatic and unconscious camouflaging of the edge of difference as it threatens to emerge.

Sooner or later, though, that edge will show itself and begin to tear the fabric of the romantic illusion of

oneness, as Stage 1 disintegrates in conflict. Stage 2 is the Power Struggle, in which differences compete for recognition and dominance, and partners take up trying to change each other. These efforts are doomed to fail, and result in frustration that inevitably leads to mutual judging and blaming. Feelings of hurt, bewilderment, resentment, fear, sadness, and sometimes rage characterize this stage of couple development, when each clings tenaciously to his or her expectations of how things should be and stubbornly resists facing and accepting things as they are.

In all likelihood, there are important matters of difference to be brought into awareness, negotiated, and resolved, but because the preoccupation in Stage 2 is really with rights, power, trust, and emotional survival, even minor conflicts very often lead to heated battling or cold withdrawal and little substantial problem-solving is possible. The roots of the struggle are in each partner's family experience - the internalization of certain childhood feelings and attitudes toward one's parents, including the wish to be taken care of - as well as in social conditioning, particularly sexism which values males over females. Until these knots can be identified and untangled, the couple is stuck in a painful stand-off.

Stage 3, Stability, can only be achieved when both partners have accepted the necessity of dealing with their

own inner conflicts and unresolved childhood issues that have manifested in a power struggle between them. Each must begin to notice the existence of parts of the self that embody differing feelings and needs, and pay more attention to these "subpersonalities," reclaiming ones that have been disowned. They will then become more aware of their own inner dramas, and have less reason to enact an outer one. When the focus of the couple shifts from the interaction between opposing partners to the interplay of parts within each self, the steam goes out of the power struggle - and energy is released for learning and growth. Constructive dialogue then allows both members of the couple to know themselves and each other more fully.

The Illusion of Peace is not an actual stage of development, but rather like a potential detour off the path of progress. After the intensity of the power struggle has abated and the new inner awareness has blossomed into a degree of stability, couples may be tempted to believe that every conflict is only a reflection of inward strife and every offense must be automatically forgiven and forgotten. This assumption can lead to conflict-avoidance that undermines the couple's ability to acknowledge and deal with real differences and make necessary compromise and change. It is important to be able to let go of conflicts that don't require attention, to "choose your challenges" in the relationship,

but also to stay conscious of the element of choice, rather than slipping into a denial of feelings that ultimately dampens aliveness and stunts growth.

Commitment is Stage 4 of the journey, which involves taking responsibility for making the relationship work, specifically by letting go of old unrealistic expectations and assuming basic trust in the relationship, in the partner, and in oneself. Building on a deepened awareness in both partners of their own mixed feelings and motives, couples who have progressed to this stage live with an on-going awareness of the power of individual consciousness to determine experience. They both understand that there is always a choice to be made about how to respond to any situation or any feeling evoked by the partner. They feel themselves to be a "we-system," and see problems in the relationship as opportunities to exercise their new-found capacities for consciousness and choice. Now that blaming and either-or thinking have lost their appeal, they find satisfaction in discovering both-and/win-win collaborative solutions and in learning to live with sometimes strange paradoxes.

Stage 5 is Co-Creation, when couples who have integrated the learnings of the first four stages into their intimate relationship experience a realization that these same principles apply in the process of building "right relationship" with the rest of the world. In other

words, the co-creative couple recognizes their interdependence and mutual responsibility - not only for and with each other - but in relation to their entire context, whatever their frame of reference, be it family, community, society, culture, humanity, nature, planet or universe. This stage of couple's development involves an opening to a sense of purpose in their relationship that may incorporate elements of their original vision, including but reaching beyond their own personal fulfillment. In co-creativity, intimate partners collaborate with positive forces outside of their immediate awareness to contribute somehow through their conscious and committed lives to the betterment of all.

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### Where Are You on the Journey?

After reading about the Couples Journey, you may already have realized what part of the process is giving you problems and where your own relationship is on the map. In case you haven't, the following exercise may prove useful. Remember that there is no Right Way to do relationship, or to proceed through these stages, which are meant to represent what issues are most prominent at certain times, not an invariable progression. In fact, you may have a very different concept of how relationships grow, and that is fine. But if this developmental mapping makes sense to you, and you would like to place yourself in

relation to it with more certainty, then you and your partner are invited (separately again) to rate your relationship on the following dimensions on a scale from 1 to 10, from least to most like your current experience.

LEAST ----- MOST

|      |                                                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |       |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1    | 2                                                                                                | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10    |
|      |                                                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |       |
| <br> |                                                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |       |
| 1/   | Your partner is hopelessly rigid and impossible to change.                                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 2/   | Your arguments are repeating themselves and going nowhere.                                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 3/   | You have been holding back your feelings on an important issue to maintain harmony.              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 4/   | You are on your "best" behavior with your partner.                                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 5/   | Your partner is often apologetic.                                                                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 6/   | You feel betrayed by your partner.                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 7/   | You spend alot of time fantasizing about getting back at your partner for something she/he did.  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 8/   | You dream repeatedly about having an affair.                                                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 9/   | You feel torn between pleasing your partner and meeting your own needs.                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 10/  | You share everything with your partner.                                                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 11/  | You are over-committed to your political work and have little time for your relationship.        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 12/  | You wouldn't be burned out if it weren't for your partner's needs or demands.                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 13/  | Your relationship is very special, and it's almost impossible to find other like-minded couples. |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |
| 14/  | Your partner is meditating so much that you feel shut out.                                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | _____ |

- 15/ You haven't had an argument for many months, but  
you're not feeling very sexual either. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16/ You are certain your partner is the answer to your  
prayers. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17/ You keep having dreams of someone trying to trap  
and kill you. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18/ You are trying hard to own your part in conflicts  
and feeling alone in this effort. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19/ You are making alot of mistakes at work because of  
obsessing about your partner. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20/ Your children are complaining that you and your  
partner don't spend enough time with them. \_\_\_\_\_

This exercise is based on Table 1 in The Couple's Journey, which lists Susan Campbell's five stages of couple development and matches them with potential lessons and possible pitfalls of each stage. The chart is reproduced here, and slightly modified, so that you can consider your responses above in relation to the issues it outlines.

| <u>Stage</u>        | <u>Developmental Tasks</u>                                                                                             | <u>Pitfalls/Illusions</u>                                                           |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/Romance           | sensing possibilities<br>creating shared vision                                                                        | the prince or<br>princess has<br>arrived<br>wishing makes it so<br>fear of conflict |
| 2/Power<br>Struggle | learning to recognize<br>& validate differing<br>needs and perceptions<br>learning to say who<br>we are & what we want | I can change him<br>her to be what<br>I need<br>revenge is sweet                    |
| 3/Stability         | learning to recognize<br>different parts of<br>the self<br>reclaiming disowned<br>parts of the self                    | avoiding conflict<br>through denial of<br>feelings                                  |



|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                              |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | taking responsibility<br>for one's own inner<br>conflicting feelings<br>instead of projecting<br>them onto partner<br>learning about self<br>and partner through<br>constructive dialogue                             | assumption that<br>differences no<br>longer need to be<br>dealt with<br><br>illusion of peace                |
| 4/Commitment        | taking responsibility<br>for making it work<br><br>practicing conscious-<br>ness and choice<br>experiencing inter-<br>dependency and the<br>"we-system"<br>learning to live with<br>paradoxes in the<br>relationship  | illusion of<br>couple's<br>separateness and<br>self-sufficiency                                              |
| 5/Co-<br>Creativity | experiencing inter-<br>dependency with all<br>of life<br>living as creators of<br>our own experience<br>and our universe<br>learning to cooperate<br>with larger forces to<br>contribute to the<br>fulfillment of all | focusing too much<br>attention on the<br>world and too<br>little on the<br>nurturance of the<br>relationship |

Here are ways to use the rating scale to assess your progress on the Couple's Journey. First, notice which of the questions got your ratings of 5 and above and therefore may resemble most closely your experience of this relationship. Look below where all the questions are grouped according to which stage they most tend to represent. (Some of them will be in more than one grouping because they could reflect issues of more than one stage - they count for each stage they are listed with.) Going to the list of stages, put a mark after one of the stages for

each question in its grouping with a rating of 5 and above. Add up the numbers of marks after each stage to see which one is weighted most heavily for you at this point in your relationship development. Remember that a neat clear sequential progression is unlikely, and couples often experience issues and stages overlapping.

| <u>Stage</u>   | <u>Questions</u>         | <u>Your Ratings of 5+</u> |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Romance        | 4,16,19,20               | _____                     |
| Power Struggle | 1,2,5,6,7,11,12,17,18,20 | _____                     |
| Stability      | 3,9,10,11,15,17,20       | _____                     |
| Commitment     | 8,10,11,13,17,18,20      | _____                     |
| Co-Creativity  | 11,14,20                 | _____                     |

It is important to keep in mind that, although many couples seek help when they are caught in protracted power struggles, there are conflicting needs and feelings that emerge at all stages. Couples who travel well together do not avoid having problems, but bring commitment, courage, consciousness, and choice to the journey.

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The Inner Child and Intimate Relationship

The Inner Child is one of the parts of the self that is usually out of awareness for most people and plays a

powerful hidden role in the development of intimate relationships. This so-called "subpersonality" carries feelings and attitudes we experienced as children, especially in relation to our parents. Along with our memories of the tender loving care we received, family roles, rules and legacies, as well as the hurts, disappointments, or abuses we experienced in childhood are remembered and held in the heart and mind of the vulnerable "child within." Our child-like capacities for fresh, immediate, uncomplicated and intense experience of feelings and body sensations and for direct emotional expression are embodied in this sensitive and sensual part of the self. Imagination, playfulness, spontaneity, wonder, and joy are also among the gifts of the Inner Child.

Getting to Know Your Inner Child

You may already have been introduced to your Inner Child because there has been so much recent publicity and consciousness-raising (especially by teacher-therapist-author-workshop leader John Bradshaw, as well as others) about the value of making such an acquaintance. Perhaps you have been in therapy or a support group or you have done some inner work that has given you an idea or experience of the child inside you who can have such major influence on your thoughts, feelings, and relationships. If this is so, the following exercises may serve as ways to

check in with a familiar young friend. If not, they might begin a process of discovery of an inner presence that can enrich and deepen your life and your intimate relationship.

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Preparation for meeting your Inner Child is important because from the time you acknowledge your willingness to engage with this part of yourself, it will be as if the child within is watching and listening for signs of your sincere interest. The Inner Child always hopes to be received and cherished, but also carries fears of being mistreated in whatever hurtful ways you were handled when you were young. It is a little like a pet that has received enough food and water to survive, but has been confined to a back room, used to not feeling known or appreciated, and so can be quite wary of new attention. By making a clear commitment to spend a certain amount of time in a particular space for the express purpose of contacting this part of yourself, you will reassure your Inner Child that you are serious about making a loving connection. Other preparations can include putting yourself behind a closed door, with a "Do Not Disturb" sign, if necessary - with phone unplugged, a comfortable chair, paper, drawing and writing utensils close by, and an attitude of openness to whatever might happen.

The easiest way to do this guided imagining is to read the instructions into a tape recorder and then play them back to yourself, pausing whenever you want more time.



You might prefer to take turns with your partner reading and visualizing, if you are feeling safe enough with each other at this time, or to ask a friend to help you with this if needed. But if you are working alone without a recorder, it is also possible to follow along by moving back and forth between the written directions and your own experiencing, just being sure to take whatever time you need to relax after reading, and being patient with your transitions.

It is helpful to begin with closing your eyes and breathing deeply ... now tensing and relaxing your body as you did before ... first tightening the muscles in your hands and face ... your arms and torso ... your shoulders and neck ... tightening and holding for a moment ... holding and now relaxing and letting go ... now tensing the muscles in your lower body ... your feet and ankles, your calves and knees and thighs ... your genitals and buttocks and belly ... tensing and holding for just a moment ... now letting them go and feeling the settling in ... Adjusting your position so that you are as comfortable as possible ... and beginning to count backwards slowly from 10 to 1, feeling yourself drawn deeper and deeper with each number, moving down, deeper and deeper ... now letting your mind travel to a place that is beautiful and safe from any danger, a place you may have visited, or one you have seen in pictures, or a place in your imagination ... This

is a place that is soothing and comforting, and where no harm may come to you ... You are protected and surrounded by a ring of light, and no one can enter this ring without your permission. Taking in the loveliness of this soothing safe place everywhere your eyes can see ... Feeling your body melting into whatever you are resting on ... Noticing the sounds of this scene, allowing them to fill your awareness ... Noticing the smells of this place, and the tastes in your mouth. Feeling yourself resting here, held in perfect safety, in perfect trust, in harmonious relationship with everything around you ... Resting and breathing ... completely at ease ....

Now letting your mind time-travel back to a place you lived as a young child ... seeing the door to this home and moving closer ... noticing the door is ajar and beginning to open ... watching as a young child slowly emerges ... and seeing that this child is - you - as you were many years ago ... Noticing the child's face, and clothes, and body, and stance, and taking it all in ... getting a sense of how this child feels about being called forth at this moment in time ...

Seeing this child, perhaps for the first time, and sensing and saying, either out loud or just in your mind, whatever you are moved to express ... then waiting for a response ... waiting ... Reminding yourself that this child may have waited for decades for you to recognize its

presence ... and you're the one patiently waiting and listening now ... When you hear the child's response in your mind, and you feel ready, slowly open your eyes and write it down - in the left-hand column below. Then put your first words to your Inner Child in the right-hand column. This may be the beginning of a life-long conversation.

| <u>Voice of the Inner Child</u> | <u>Your Voice</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |

When you have finished writing, close your eyes again, breathe, then notice your feelings in response to whatever your Inner Child has said, letting them come through your mind in words - then listening for the voice of the Child - and when you are ready, opening your eyes and writing these down in the columns below.

| <u>Voice of the Inner Child</u> | <u>Your Voice</u> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |
|                                 |                   |

It is important to understand that it may take considerable time before any intimacy is established, and that the Child may need to show distrust, fear, sadness, anger, or even silent rejection before feeling safe to open up with you. The more encouraging you are of the Child's expression of a wide range of feelings, the more willing you are to hear whatever is real in this moment, the more likely you are to be allowed to know this part of yourself. This can require gentle persistence and a great deal of patience, which will eventually be richly rewarded.

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Continue this getting-acquainted dialogue with your Inner Child - now using the hand you normally use to write to record your own voice, and changing to your other (non-dominant) hand to write down the responses of your Inner Child. This may feel awkward or silly at first, but will actually reproduce some of the feelings you had as you were learning to write as a child, and will greatly assist your ability to contact the experience of the younger you. Switching hands back and forth will also help you to notice the often distinctly different feelings, wants, and needs connected with these two parts of yourself.

<u>Voice of the Inner Child</u>	<u>Your Voice</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____


~~~~~

Although guided imagery, dialoguing, and non-dominant hand writing are especially effective ways of drawing out the voice of the Inner Child, there are many activities that can increase your awareness of this enlivening part of yourself. Because it is the nature of the child within to meet life with an openness and immediacy that is usually sacrificed in the process of growing up, its simple and intense responses can be elicited by an enormous variety of sensual, physical, and emotional experiences.

The following are some suggestions for things you can do alone or with a partner to evoke the vivid presence of your Inner Child.

- 1/ Nurturing: The Inner Child loves to be nurtured and responds positively to all kinds of physical comfort, such as a warm bath, a cuddly quilt, a cup of hot milk, tea, cocoa or lemonade, or a soft chair to nestle into. Tender touching is another favorite, including well-timed sincere hugs from someone close,

hand-holding, snuggling, stroking of the hair, and foot or back massage (that is clearly non-sexual.)

2/ Physical Activity: Running, jumping, skipping, hopping, throwing and catching a ball, rolling down a grassy knoll, dancing free-form to music, as well as childhood sports like jump-rope, skating, sledding, and experiences of disequilibrium like twirling around or rides on a merry-go-round or in an amusement park can bring out the Inner Child who is full of energy and at ease in the body.

3/ Sensory Experience: The child-like capacity for intense immediate responsiveness can sometimes be prompted by certain sounds, smells, tastes, and textures, which are often quite individual and related to specific childhood experiences. A train in the distance, a lawnmower outside, a bell in a tower, a factory whistle, a voice calling a name from a doorway at dusk in summer, kitchen sounds of meal preparation, a dog barking; the smell of gasoline or road tar or bacon cooking or fresh-cut grass, a dusty street after a rain or exhaust from a clothes dryer, pine needles warmed by the sun or a particular soap or cologne; cookies and milk or gumballs or marshmallows over an open fire, porridge or cough syrup or liver, or traditional holiday treats; a scratchy wool sweater against the cheek, a caught baseball stinging through a leather mitt, stiff new dress-shoes or bouncy new sneakers, soft moss on a hard cold rock. These are some of the kinds of sensory events that might put you in instantaneous touch with the child you were who still lives within you. In such moments there is an opportunity to extend and explore this contact, if you choose to, and that choice can bring learning as well as pleasure.

4/ Animals and Nature: Relating to pets can slow down your adult's drivenness and prompt feelings of tenderness as well as the sense memory of rare childhood dominance in relation to these unconditionally loving beings who were uniquely smaller and weaker than you. Being in the natural world can call forth a deeper sense of belonging or at-home-ness, especially if the rural out-of-doors was a refuge for you in childhood.

5/ Music: Particular instruments or musical pieces can be very evocative sensory experiences - and there are lullabies, school or camp or family holiday or car songs, advertising jingles or theme songs from tv shows, and increasingly, favorite tapes you might

have played over and over in your own little kiddie recorder that can elicit Inner Child awareness.

- 6/ Emotions: The Inner Child is always available through your strongest feelings, whether they are in response to pain or to joy. Although you are not likely to intentionally seek emotional intensity to promote a relationship with the child within, there is often the choice to allow and attend to or even inquire into your feelings, or to suppress or deny awareness of them. It may help to remember that the Inner Child communicates through feelings and body sensations, and, like other children who are not listened to, when ignored may well react with acting out or illness.
- 7/ Humor: The Inner Child loves to laugh, to fool around, to clown - to make other people laugh, too, as long as it's not at something done by mistake. Finding fun and silliness and reasons for spontaneous joyous sometimes uncontrollable giggling, the child within knows how to let go into sparkling happiness.
- 8/ Playfulness: The essence of children, their life's work and reason for being, their modus operandi and vehicle for learning and healing, the Inner Child will come out for this if all else fails. Stories, games, jokes, riddles, songs and dances, make-believe fantasies or pretend real-life situations - sand-trays and doll-houses, chalk-boards and puppets, dinosaurs and dolls, goggles and hats, dishes and clay to make "food" out of, and unplugged telephones for saying things you'd never say directly - give yourself time and room to play and your child within will find time for you.
- 9/ Creativity: Really another form of playfulness, but one that may draw on deeper resources and require greater risk-taking. Not every inner child will jump at the opportunity to "be creative" - probably because there is so much damage done to children's self-confidence through usually well-meaning judgments, both positive and negative, of their naturally occurring and then school-assigned efforts. Although your child within may be one for whom self-expression through arts and crafts media has been crippled by performance pressure, the chance that one or more of these avenues will release the Inner Child's imaginative capacity and tap into innate wisdom and joy seems well worth the investment of energy. Colored markers, crayons and paints, scissors and glue, paper of all sizes, cotton and colored felt pieces, popsicle sticks and



pipe cleaners, yarn and string and ribbon and lace, stickers and sparkly glitter, pine cones and pebbles and shells and twigs, magazines to cut pictures and words from, and envelopes for hand-made cards. Giving yourself permission to do just anything at all with materials like these can be the very invitation that your Inner Child needs to come out and play.

10/ Wonder: Letting go of skepticism and resistance, and surrendering to an experience of beauty or awesome appreciation is a capacity of the Inner Child. Whatever takes you to the edge of your understanding and puts you in a state of utter receptivity to what is beyond - whether this is for you witnessing a sunset or rainbow or communion service, climbing a mountain or diving off a high board, eating a perfect strawberry, attending to birth or death or healing or some form of excellence, or through intensive prayer or meditation - whenever you are fully present and available to your own experiencing - there is an exquisite joy and a sense of wonder, as well as an opening to your potential for spiritual fulfillment. All this is possible because of the Inner Child, who keeps us connected to the body and feelings, to animals and nature, to our playfulness and creativity - and to our spiritual essence.

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Activities such as these may be built into your life already, and if they are, you are probably familiar with the energetic aliveness that is possible when your Inner Child feels nurtured and respected on many levels. If this list has made you aware of how little you do to connect with the child within, you might want to take a moment now to review it and notice which ideas make that part of you perk up with interest. Rereading each category and checking yourself for an inner response, a bubbling up of even a little energy, write below the new activities you are willing to consider trying.

1/ Nurturing _____

2/ Physical Activity _____

3/ Sensory Experience _____

4/ Animals and Nature _____

5/ Music _____

6/ Emotions _____

7/ Humor _____

8/ Playfulness _____

9/ Creativity _____

10/ Wonder _____

~~~~~

### You Only Hurt the One You Love

The Inner Child is a major force in determining your experience of intimate relationship, from the first inklings of attraction to the end of the road - whether that means separation or divorce or the increasingly rare "til death do us part." It may be that the child within actually chooses your partner - by checking prospective candidates for both positive and negative qualities that were prominent in your parents, and allowing only those with a certain combination of traits to even apply for the job. The key to this magical mixture is how it will ultimately serve you in two very important ways.

The person has to be someone who will sooner or later restimulate wounds from your childhood - and - in so doing, will provide an unparalleled opportunity to attend to and heal those wounds.

Here are two of the basic premises of this Workbook:  
That intimate attraction is fundamentally grounded in the

Inner Child's awareness of the potential through connecting to the partner, not only for certain kinds of nurturance, but also, on another deeper level, for an old familiar kind of hurt. And that these possibilities are realized through a relationship process that necessarily triggers childhood vulnerability and now dysfunctional self-protective patterns of interaction - in order to create the opportunity for healing.

There is clearly a bittersweet paradox to this situation, and perhaps an obvious explanation for why so many love boats end up on the rocks. The voyage usually begins for both people with a period of child-like openness, intensity, tenderness, joy, and wonder, as well as an overflowing of spontaneous generosity. The Inner Child in each partner feels amazingly known and safe in the arms of the other, as if a powerful and devoted parent were providing shelter and protection.

In fact, the capacity for nurturance blossoms as well, and each may feel the fullness of a parental kind of loving that seems eternal and unconditional for the Inner Child in the other. Glorious hopes and expectations evolve naturally out of this harmonious bonding. Often a vision of mutual fulfillment of higher potentials emerges as well. The vessel of their growing intimacy is under full sail, and suddenly, inevitably, they encounter an unexpected storm and a submerged shoal.

Disagreement reveals conflicting feelings and needs, and maybe for the first time, precisely because they now feel secure enough together, neither is adaptable or charming. Then something happens to trigger in at least one of them a feeling and body memory of an earlier hurt at the hands of someone beloved. The actual historical event is probably (though not always) out of awareness, but the current inner experience is an exaggerated one of being attacked or abandoned, and the Inner Child contracts in fear. When the vulnerable child within becomes frightened, the person reacts in some way to protect against what feels like an intentional assault or deprivation by the partner.

At this point, if not sooner, the Inner Child of the other also feels threatened, and defenses are mustered against the very person who was so recently perceived as the source of exquisite nurturance, who now is seen as intent on (inner) child abuse. So quickly the children within have been disappointed, that both people are stunned and reeling, wondering if their original judgments of their partners were exceptionally poor.

Many couples seek help at the prodding of their disappointed inner children, and then often spend a great deal of time accusing each other of what they have experienced as a betrayal of a kind of parental responsibility. Assumptions abound about how caring would or should have been expressed IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME -



(read this "if you were a GOOD parent to my child-self, instead of a bad one.")

The most common unconscious deal between intimate partners is the agreement to give up taking care of one's own inner child in order to provide impossibly well for the other's. When trouble hits a new relationship, and "the honeymoon is over," people usually end up complaining about not being nurtured in ways they were led to believe they could count on, and not being able to restore the partner's earlier sensitivity. It is a paradox that in intimate relationship feelings of child-like openness and vulnerability are most intensely experienced and enacted, and then, sooner or later, most ferociously denied and defended against.

The heart of the problem is this: the Inner Child can be and usually is disowned by both partners - during both the Romance and Power Struggle stages of relationship - first unconsciously given over for nurturance to the supposedly good and cooperative parent in the lover, and then whisked away behind a defensive wall, still out of awareness, when feelings of vulnerability threaten to become overwhelming. The solution lies in reclaiming awareness and responsibility for one's own child within and becoming conscious of its particular influence in your intimate relationship.

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The following exercise is intended to help you increase your awareness of some of the effects of your Inner Child on your selection of a partner. It is adapted from Harville Hendrix's "Imago" couples therapy program in Getting the Love You Want. Take a minute to make yourself comfortable where you are ... closing your eyes and breathing deeply a few times ... Now letting your mind time-travel back to early childhood ... Picture yourself playing in a favorite spot as a young child ... now being called in for the evening meal ... settling into your chair at the family table ... now seeing your parents entering the room and assuming their usual roles ... holding them in your mind ... focusing on them and feeling their presence at meal-times ... Recalling the things you loved most about them ... feeling your family connection to the best and dearest parts of them ... savoring this awareness of their strengths ... now drifting a moment ... and allowing your mind to move ... to their most difficult qualities ... recalling the things about your parents that you always wished you could change ... feeling your frustration or embarrassment or pain ... now letting your awareness go back and forth - between the most nurturing parts of them - and - their most hurtful or disappointing parts ... noticing which ones provoke some kind of shift in your energy, feelings or body, which ones have an emotional charge that suggests they affect you more than the others.

When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and write in the columns below.

<u>Parents' Negative Qualities</u>	<u>Parents' Positive Qualities</u>

Taking another minute now to settle back into your childhood ... letting your mind float gently through the memories ... now finding some of your sad or scarey or angry times as a child, times when one or both of your parents hurt your feelings in some important way ... feeling yourself cut off from them ... feeling alone, helpless, confused ... now floating away from these memories ... drifting again ... now finding some of your happiest moments of knowing your parents' love for you, having their attention and affection ... recalling where you were and what was happening ... letting the warmth of these times fill your awareness ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes, and write down your memories in the columns below.

<u>Negative Memories</u>	<u>Positive Memories</u>

Returning again to a comfortable position,
breathing a few times deeply, relaxing into awareness of
your breath moving naturally in and out of your body ...
Focusing on your breath now, just noticing the feeling of
inhaling and exhaling at the opening of your nose and mouth
... shifting your awareness to your belly and diaphragm,
noticing the rising and falling ... and letting go now ...
and floating ... floating to an image of your intimate
partner ... picturing him or her in as much detail as
possible ... allowing the impression of your partner to
fill your mind ... now visualizing one of your happiest
times together ... recalling where you were and what were
you doing ... imagining the scene and feeling your delight
in your partner ... letting the warmth of this moment fill
up your mind ... savoring the softness and ease of this
time ... now floating again through images and impressions
of the two of you together ... letting your mind move to
one of your painful times ... noticing where you were and
what you were doing ... and letting other difficult times
for you as a couple come into your mind ... allowing the
scenes to unfold ... feeling the disappointment and tension
... feeling the sadness or anger ... and then floating away
from the problems for now and ... when you are ready,

slowly opening your eyes and recording these memories in the columns below.

Negative Memories

Positive Memories

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Returning once more to relaxing, closing your eyes and taking a few deeper breaths ... trusting that what you need will come to you ... imagining your intimate partner as he or she looks and is today ... picturing the face, the hair, the body and movement and posture, the clothes, and the attitude of your partner ... now letting your awareness focus on the qualities in your partner that are most troublesome for you ... allowing yourself to see and feel what is most irritating about him or her, what it is you would most like to change ... feeling your resentment and frustration ... feeling the weight of your disappointment ... now floating away again ... drifting through images and impressions ... now noticing whatever it is about this person that perks up your interest, elicits warm feelings ... letting the best of your partner come into your mind ... filling your awareness with the pleasure your partner

can bring to you ... When you are ready, slowly open your eyes, and write these things in the appropriate columns.

Negative Qualities

Positive Qualities

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now go back to the list of your parents' positive and negative qualities, checking it against the list of your partner's traits, and using the columns below to compare the two. Doing the same for your lists of positive and negative memories of both may help you to acknowledge the influence of your Inner Child in selecting your partner.

Parents' Positive Qualities

Partner's Positive Qualities

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Parents' Negative Qualities

Partner's Negative Qualities

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Negative Memories - Parents

Negative Memories - Partner

Positive Memories - Parents

Positive Memories - Partner

~~~~~

### Who Needs Help - and - Who Is the Helper

As we have seen so far, the Inner Child is a very important part of the self, with a powerful influence on attraction and partner selection. Further along we will look more closely at how the child within functions in relationships, but first it is important to understand something about two other members of your inner team, without whom adult intimacy is impossible.

Every child needs a parent of some sort - and so it is with the Inner Child. Your Inner Parent is the part of you that can nourish and protect and manage that little "live-wire" within you. It is the part that provides the discipline and guidance necessary to keep this "ball of fire" from taking over and burning you out. As with other children, the Inner Child can actually turn into a mini-tyrant if allowed free reign over the rest of one's personality, insisting that life be composed of pleasure after pleasure in succession, so that nothing else is ever accomplished. (Sounds good? Ah, well ....)

Unfortunately, a lack of supervision results in a lack of grounding, which can lead to a destructive sense of entitlement, an excess of power over others, a lack of compassion, and generally, a serious crippling of the ability to live in intimate human connection. Besides, someone has to be concerned with the more mundane practical details of life that require a certain amount of self-control and self-denial, such as earning a living, cooking the food, and tending the "outer" children.

The Inner Parent is a multi-faceted mostly well-meaning character who wears many responsibility hats, and can range across a full gamut of possible tendencies - from reliably attentive, nurturant and wise - to unpredictably moody and erratic - to neglectful or abusive. Including capacities for criticism and authoritarian rigid control,



as well as benevolent caretaking, the parent within can be as distorted in its priorities and as off-center as the undisciplined sociopathic Inner Child.

Another part of the self is definitely needed to balance the often conflicting energies of parent and child within. Hal Stone and Sidra Winkelman in their books Embracing Ourselves and Embracing Each Other have given this part the title "Aware Ego." Others have called it the "Observing Ego" or "Center" or "Witness" - but its functions by any name are pretty much the same. This is the part of you that can hear the Inner Child and the Inner Parent duking it out inside you, when they are incapable of hearing each other or functioning cooperatively. And this part embodies your ability to take into consideration the most beneficial of their influences, while setting boundaries to guard against their excesses. In other words, the Aware Ego does a crucial balancing of the immensely valuable aliveness of the Inner Child with the Inner Parent's necessary social regulation - which potentially allows a full-spirited adult self to enjoy life while also paying the bills!

Couples come into counseling with many ideas about what they want, some of which they can talk about openly, and quite a few of which are so-called "hidden agendas" - sometimes hidden even from themselves. One person might seem or be more interested than the other in getting help,

but it frequently emerges that what he or she has in mind is really to get help in "helping" the other partner - to change, to improve, to heal, to grow up, to fulfill more of his or her potential. Although these may be worthy goals, possibly shared by the seemingly resistant one, they are usually related more to the needs of the parent part of the wrong person, whose hunger to "help" may actually provoke the other's Inner Child to rebellion.

Usually both people want validation for their own ways of seeing and feeling and being in the relationship. In particular, many feel victimized by their partners and seek understanding and relief and justice from the couples counselor, whose role is, of course, not as a judge. Many couples fight at length about who is responsible for their problems, desperately trying to defend themselves from feelings of inadequacy rooted in childhood and their own inner sense of guilt over not having done enough to make things right. So much time is spent on this effort to assign blame that the problems themselves may never begin to be defined - unless someone (and preferably some-two) wakes up and starts to get at the root of what is always a mutually created stuckness.

At the root is usually a twisted misunderstanding about what it means to care - and this knot must be undone for two people to be able to be free to experience a genuinely loving relationship. The key to such liberation

is first that each person's team of Inner Parent and Aware Ego is responsible for only one Inner Child, and no other. This lesson is often one of the hardest for couples to learn. It is as if the automatic mandate of falling in love is for you to take over completely the feeding of your partner's child within, while agreeing to sorely neglect your own. Very many tangled relational webs are woven with threads of this theme, sometimes called mutual "co-dependency," which is essential to unravel to know for sure "who needs help - and - who is the helper."

There is an old saying about couples' arguments - that if one partner wins, both are the losers. There's little hope of resolving the fundamental impasses in a couple relationship unless both people are willing to take a crucial step. It may be the most important of all possible steps toward real and lasting change - as Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks write in Conscious Loving. This is for each partner to commit to taking 100% responsibility for what is happening between them. This doesn't mean 50% and then quibbling about whose half was smaller yesterday or should be larger tomorrow - but immediate and total 100% responsibility for all of it from now on.

Who needs help? Both people do - in order to bring into awareness their inner dynamics, and to get straight what their first priority must be: for each to work at developing the Aware Ego, the key to balancing attention to

and promoting cooperation between the parent and child within. Who is the helper? Both people are, since each must commit to taking 100% responsibility for his or her Inner Child and for creating the grounded aliveness that fosters intimate connection.

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The following exercise is intended to give you and your partner an opportunity to identify ways that you express caring for each other by helping. Each of you should respond to these four questions, once again, separately for now.

1. What are some of your favorite ways of expressing love and caring for your partner by helping her or him?

2. What are some of the things your partner does for you that you know are meant to express his or her caring?

3. Think for a minute of your partner's most successful efforts to show you his or her caring, times when you have

been really delighted and felt securely loved, nurtured, and cared for. What did he or she do in those times?

4. Take a minute to recall a few times when your partner was obviously delighted by something you did to help him or her, times when he or she clearly received and felt your love, nurturance, and caring. What had you done?

5. Now recall a time or times when you were trying to do something loving for your partner, but for some reason he or she didn't understand or misinterpreted or criticized your action, and responded in a way that hurt your feelings. Remember as well as you can what had you done.

6. Now try to recall a time or times when you felt invaded or disregarded because your partner was trying to do

something for you or help you in some way that you really didn't need or want. What was he or she doing then?

As you can probably see from your own answers alone, the desire to help your partner can turn into something very different from what you intended. If you and your partner feel comfortable sharing your responses to these questions, you may learn even more about how important it is to know whose Inner Child you are trying to nurture when you think you have the perfect way to show him or her your love.

Too often, efforts to help and to express much-needed caring are wasted because partners lack two pieces of essential information about themselves and each other. One is: that the specific kind words or helping behaviors that best communicate caring to your partner may be very different from the ones that mean the most to you. And two: that your sense of what your partner really wants from you is all too likely to be shaped, and very possibly distorted, by the unmet needs of your disowned child within. If your Aware Ego is weak, and for some reason your Inner Parent is focusing on the needs of your

partner's Inner Child instead of adequately meeting your own, there is bound to be a tangle.

Only when you and your partner know that the caretaking team inside each of you is in the habit of tending your own Inner Child in an on-going reliable way, can you trust that your impulses to help each other are clean and less likely to backfire. The key to successful helping, giving, and receiving in your intimate relationship is, once again, for both of you to commit yourselves to taking complete responsibility for your own Inner Child and your own well-being.

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#### Crucial Commitment #1

You and your partner are now invited to ask yourselves if you are willing to make this crucial commitment. You might want to take a moment, sit quietly, and try it on ... letting your resistant feelings and reasons for postponing float through your mind ... letting anything that makes you hesitate to genuinely commit right now to this shift in your attitude come into your awareness ... and writing whatever it is, logical or not, below.

"I feel ambivalent about or can't or don't want to - make this commitment at this time because ...."

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"However, the reasons I do want to make this commitment now are ...."

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Now, in light of your excellent reasons for doing it, and regarding, but not being stopped by, your reservations ... in the spirit of the Inner Child, who loves to play and even to pretend ... take the plunge! Yes - on the lines below - each of you write the following affirmation of your intention, as if you fully believed it and meant it, putting your own name in the blank space, signing and entering today's date, and using the following words:

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit myself to taking 100% responsibility for my own Inner Child, and for my well-being in this relationship."

Partner #1 \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Partner #2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have put your commitment in writing, please take five pieces of blank paper (or large post-it notes) and write it again on each one. These are meant to be reminders of your intention. Putting them in places where you are likely to see them regularly or to come across them unexpectedly will serve to help you continually renew your commitment.

The next step is for each of you to find a mirror, or to take turns using the same one, but separately and alone. As you look at yourself in the mirror, repeat aloud the commitment you have just made on paper. Say it over a few times, noticing how your voice sounds and how you feel as you do this ... Stop when it starts to feel real to you - or - when it just feels like time to move on to the next step in this process. It usually works best to avoid sharing any reactions with your partner - and to read the next set of directions and follow them without comment or discussion. Also be sure to protect the next few minutes from any interruption ....

[Take turns reading the following instructions to each other in a soft slow voice.]

Choosing a place where you can sit comfortably across from your partner ... settling into your seat and closing your eyes ... letting your mind focus on your breathing ... just feeling your inhalation and exhalation ... now allowing an image of your Inner Child to come into your mind ... just noticing your feelings as you hold this image ... now looking into the face of your Inner Child ... and keeping your silence ... repeat the words of your commitment again in your mind, speaking directly to your own child within ... paying attention to any changes you see in that young face or feelings in your own body ... now sitting and just breathing gently and easily for a little while ....

[When both of you have had a turn at this, read the next set of directions, and decide together whether or not you want to tape them or read them to each other. Then follow them without comment or discussion, each of you bringing a copy of the commitment to your seat, and ending the last part of this next exercise with a few minutes of silence. After that, if possible, go your separate ways for at least a little while before continuing.]

... Sitting comfortably across from each other ... taking a few deep breaths and settling in ... now looking into the eyes of your partner ... sitting and looking in silence for a brief moment ... and when you are ready ... keeping your eyes on the face of your partner ... repeating

this statement ... each of you in turn ... [Partner #1] -  
 "This is my commitment to myself and to you, my partner: I  
 now commit myself to taking 100% responsibility for my  
 Inner Child, and for my own well-being in this  
 relationship" ... [Partner #2] - "This is my commitment to  
 myself and to you, my partner: I now commit myself to  
 taking 100% responsibility for my Inner Child, and for my  
 well-being in this relationship" ... now closing your eyes  
 and allowing some silence, and then separation to follow...

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*Please take at least a brief break before going on to the
 next section - (you'll probably need it!)*

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### The Treasures of Your Shadow

#### "The Long Bag We Drag"

Now that you and your partner have, hopefully, grown  
 a bit more aware, untangled your inner parents and  
 children to a certain extent, and made The #1 Crucial  
 Commitment, you ought to have clear sailing on your  
 intimate journey - right? Wrong, of course. Although  
 you've taken significant steps to bring more light to your  
 relationship with each other, there is a very important  
 part of the self that is likely to try to pull you both  
 back into the dark.

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, whose writings about the human psyche span the first half of this century, and whose influence on the field is second only to his mentor Sigmund Freud, defined the Shadow most broadly as "the whole unconscious." Poet and workshop leader Robert Bly in A Little Book on the Human Shadow uses the phrase "The long bag we drag behind us" to describe what has also been referred to by some as our "dark side." The Shadow is the part of the self that embodies, out of the light of awareness, all of the polar opposites of the qualities we consciously identify with as our own. The set of characteristics we hold dear in our minds as our own, as representing who-we-believe-we-really-are, composes our "light" side or the Persona, which is a word that also means "mask." John Welwood in Journey of the Heart calls this "the husk of who we are ... an outer shell with no juice, that doesn't allow us to connect deeply with another being."

In simplest terms, then, each of us has a Mask and a Bag, the Mask being the mostly positive image we have of ourselves and what we assume others are seeing, while the Bag is full of all the parts of ourselves which, for one reason or another, we have not yet allowed ourselves to acknowledge.

The Shadow-Bag holds a collection of traits and tendencies - many of which made an appearance early in



life, were found to be unacceptable in our families, and so had to be hidden away to gain their approval. This selection process was a necessary part of building the Persona-Mask, which was and still is in many ways our ticket to being connected with other people.

The rules and requirements for participation in other social groupings contribute to the formation of the Persona and the Shadow. Schools, churches, teams, clubs and even informal friendship circles have sometimes rigid ideas about what is and isn't allowed for those who are members. To a certain extent, parts of the self that are welcomed in these settings are incorporated into the developing personality, while parts of the self that don't fit threaten the possibility of belonging - and are usually relegated to the Shadow to ensure relatively smooth social functioning.

You and your partner are now invited to take a few minutes to begin to apply these concepts to yourselves. (You may want to make a copy of these pages before doing this exercise.) Using the lines below, list twenty qualities that first come to your mind in response to the question:

"What are the most prominent aspects of your personality?"

1/ \_\_\_\_\_ 11/ \_\_\_\_\_

2/ \_\_\_\_\_ 12/ \_\_\_\_\_

3/ \_\_\_\_\_ 13/ \_\_\_\_\_

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 4/  | 14/ |
| 5/  | 15/ |
| 6/  | 16/ |
| 7/  | 17/ |
| 8/  | 18/ |
| 9/  | 19/ |
| 10/ | 20/ |

Now make another list in response to the same question about your partner: "What are the most prominent aspects of my partner's personality?," using lines below to record your first thoughts.

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1/  | 11/ |
| 2/  | 12/ |
| 3/  | 13/ |
| 4/  | 14/ |
| 5/  | 15/ |
| 6/  | 16/ |
| 7/  | 17/ |
| 8/  | 18/ |
| 9/  | 19/ |
| 10/ | 20/ |

Before you and your partner compare your lists, make a conscious joint decision about whether or not you both want to do so. If either of you has any objection, it will benefit you both to wait. Please keep in mind that you have been asked to do a very quick and probably shallow

version of describing yourselves and each other. It may well be that parts of your personality you consider significant or even essential, on deeper reflection, are missing from your partner's list - or even from your own. You are, of course, welcome to take more time with this exercise at your leisure, and encouraged to do so. You will probably learn enough for our purposes here, however, from just this quick run-through. List below the qualities from your partner's description of you that more or less match your own description of yourself.

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1/ _____  | 11/ _____ |
| 2/ _____  | 12/ _____ |
| 3/ _____  | 13/ _____ |
| 4/ _____  | 14/ _____ |
| 5/ _____  | 15/ _____ |
| 6/ _____  | 16/ _____ |
| 7/ _____  | 17/ _____ |
| 8/ _____  | 18/ _____ |
| 9/ _____  | 19/ _____ |
| 10/ _____ | 20/ _____ |

The elements that appear on both of your lists may compose at least part of your Persona, the image you consciously hold of yourself and present to the world.

Now list below the qualities from your partner's description of you that DO NOT match any parts of your own self-description.

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1/ _____ | 6/ _____  |
| 2/ _____ | 7/ _____  |
| 3/ _____ | 8/ _____  |
| 4/ _____ | 9/ _____  |
| 5/ _____ | 10/ _____ |

As you consider the qualities your partner has included in his or her description of you, notice how you feel about being described in these ways, and put those feelings into words below.

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Your partner's differing description of you may or may not contain some aspects of your Shadow. There is a possibility, though, that your feelings have something to do with peeking in, through his or her eyes, at a small portion of the unknown treasures in your "long bag."

No matter how accurate your self-perception is, or how well your description of yourself matches the Persona certain others would construct for you, like everyone else, you cannot have an omniscient perspective on yourself. No matter how much you can see in a mirror, there will always be blind spots. Because it is impossible



to get far enough outside of yourself to experience what others do in your presence, there is always the chance that someone else can know something about you that you have yet to learn. Your intimate partner is potentially in the ideal position to know more about the best and the worst of you than anyone else in the world. As you are for him or her. And for this reason, sometimes your most repeated criticisms of each other can be a quick route to some of your Shadow elements. Please take a moment now to record below your most frequent criticisms of your partner.

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Now write down the criticisms you hear most often from your partner.

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Criticism is always a touchy issue in relationships, and even more so in a deeper, more intimate connection. If you and your partner have chosen to share your lists of criticisms, it will probably work best for you to do this

without alot of elaboration, as food for thought in relation to the goal of each of you better understanding and beginning to identify your own Shadow.

The tricky thing about criticism is that listening to your partner's may point you in the direction of your own Shadow - and - listening to your own may do the same! Yes, this seemingly harmful and antagonistic habit of naming each other's faults has its up-side. The real challenge is to take in the specifics of whatever your partner is saying about you, sincerely and repeatedly asking her or him a question recommended by Harville Hendrix in Getting the Love You Want: "What are you seeing that I am not seeing?"

Another important path to awareness of Shadow elements can be intense positive feelings. Although it may be difficult to remember if your relationship is going through a troubled time, do your best to list below any aspects of your partner that now or in the past have aroused strong feelings of admiration, envy, or competitiveness in you.

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Now think for a moment about your experience of your partner's positive feedback to you, in any form, verbal or

non-verbal, and see if you have any awareness of what aspects of yourself your partner might strongly admire. Note also any areas where he or she seems to be envious or competitive with you.

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As paradoxical as it may seem, the desirable qualities you have listed above as your partner's may be potentials within yourself crying for recognition. Just as your negative associations and criticisms can rebound with meaning for yourself, so do some of your most positive feelings and reasons for being in your relationship have this dual function. This phenomenon can be explained in one word: Projection.

Projection refers to what happens to disowned elements of the self. The qualities hidden away in the "long bag" do not just lie dormant. On the contrary, they are very active in your emotional life and particularly in your close relationships through the unconscious process of projection. It is as if these historically unacceptable aspects of the self are thrown or projected like home movies onto other people's personalities, so that you actually perceive them as belonging to others - and not at

all to yourself. In actuality, projections cannot "stick" to another person unless he or she provides what is known as a "hook." A hook amounts to just enough of the projected characteristic to make it hang right where it was thrown - which makes this process very tricky, but also rich with possibilities for learning.

One of the most reliable routes to Shadow awareness, in addition to the partnership-focused exercises above, is to pay attention to the qualities that arouse your strongest emotional reactions in any of the people you deal with personally or experience indirectly through the stories of others or through reading, television or movies. Again, both negative and positive feelings are important to consider. Quickly list below, without thinking too much about it, the traits or tendencies in others that can predictably delight you in your daily life.

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1/ _____ | 6/ _____  |
| 2/ _____ | 7/ _____  |
| 3/ _____ | 8/ _____  |
| 4/ _____ | 9/ _____  |
| 5/ _____ | 10/ _____ |

Now list traits and tendencies of others that inevitably hurt your feelings or irritate or annoy you.

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1/ _____ | 6/ _____ |
| 2/ _____ | 7/ _____ |
| 3/ _____ | 8/ _____ |



4/ \_\_\_\_\_ 9/ \_\_\_\_\_  
 5/ \_\_\_\_\_ 10/ \_\_\_\_\_

Other very important indicators of unexplored riches waiting to be found in your "bag" are any tendencies you might have toward addictive or compulsive behavior. The strong hunger to do something repeatedly that gives pleasure in the moment but also has unpleasant or hurtful consequences for yourself or for others is a pretty sure sign that some of your deeper feelings and needs are trying to get your attention. Jungian analyst, author and workshop leader, Marion Woodman, has written about the inner drive to perfectionism as the root of all addictions. It's as if the intense good feelings these habits produce come mainly from the temporary relief they offer from otherwise seemingly unavoidable bad feelings - about the failure to meet our own impossible standards.

What are some of the ways that you use to try to escape from bad feelings into good ones - things you do for yourself that yield moments of deliciousness or thrills or fun or some sense of control or just plain relief, but might tend to leave you vulnerable afterwards to more self-criticism and even worse feelings? Be as honest as you can with yourself, and write whatever comes to mind below.

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Dreams and physical symptoms can also provide clues to feelings and needs that are stuck in your Shadow. Very important information about yourself can be trying to come to you through your body or in the language of symbolic images. Think for a minute about these two aspects of your experience lately - then use the lines below to note what's been happening - especially if anything in either of these categories has been reoccurring or lasted awhile.

Dreams: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical Symptoms: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Is it possible that any of the qualities or tendencies that you have included in your lists above are actually some of the treasures buried in the darkness of your Shadow and awaiting your discovery?

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## The Inner Child and the Shadow

The Inner Child may be the most disowned and frequently projected part of the self, living most of its life in the Shadow. From its position out of awareness, it exerts considerable influence over much of human endeavor and interaction, but in the realm of intimate relationship, its role is paramount. Earlier in the Workbook, we described how the Inner Child of both people usually emerges quite fully in its most gratifying form when two people are falling in love - as they become temporarily more trusting, open, spontaneous, giving, and intensely feeling than they normally are. We also looked at one of the ways the Inner Child affects couples by directing feelings of initial attraction toward someone who carries both positive and negative qualities of the parents. You may have done the exercise naming and comparing some of your parents' characteristics with some of your partner's, and noting the commonalities. It is perhaps easy to understand why people are drawn to some of their parents' strengths, but why some of their weaknesses also have appeal is a little more complicated, and has much to do with the Shadow.

In addition to its present-oriented emotional-physical-sensual-playful-creative aliveness, your Inner Child embodies another important dimension that relates more to your history. In particular, your emotional and

physical memories of how you were hurt in childhood by your parents or caretakers, are held in the wounded aspect of the Inner Child. These memories of hurt form the tenderest most vulnerable elements of your psyche or feeling-self, and inhabit your Shadow as long as they are out of your awareness. You may already be well-acquainted with what some of these are, but, if not, you can usually get clues about them by asking yourself the following question: "What words, deeds, events, or situations in my current life make me feel the most intense fear, anger, or sadness I ever feel?" You and your partner are invited to answer this question for yourselves right now below.

Fear: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Anger: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sadness: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes it is relatively easy to notice the connections between what "gets your goat" nowadays and the things that hurt you the most when you were a child, but these fault-lines in your personality can also be hard to



detect. Although it can be very beneficial to you as an individual and to your intimate relationship to get to know your wounded child within, it can also be unsettling or even disruptive to begin such a process, if you haven't already. The rest of this exercise is designed to help you learn more about the childhood origins of sensitive issues or "buttons" that exist in your adult life and possibly get pushed and cause trouble in your couple relationship - but you are first encouraged to check in with your Inner Child and your Inner Parent about whether or not you are ready to proceed.

You might try using the dialogue technique again, recording the voice of the Inner Child with your non-dominant hand. This time, though, we'll add a third column in the middle to represent the Aware Ego, whose function, you may recall, is to listen without judgment to both the child and parent voices. With your overall best interests as its goal, the Aware Ego will consider and balance their conflicting feelings and needs in order to arrive at a conscious decision about whether to go on with this exercise at this time.

One way to begin is to have the Inner Parent express a desire to continue to explore the vulnerable aspect of the Inner Child, then ask for the Inner Child's response to that idea, and then have the Aware Ego comment on what it has heard. The beginning might look a little like this:



feelings of both sides, extracting from each the wisest and most caring elements it has offered, and then make a decision on behalf of both of them and yourself. The Aware Ego might sound a little like this:

|       |                 |       |
|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <hr/> | I hear the I.C. | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | is scared of    | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | losing the good | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | feelings it's   | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | having today -  | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | while the I.P.  | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | wants to know   | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | more that will  | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | help with the   | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | relationship &  | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | wants to assure | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | the I.C. that   | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | the I.P. can    | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | take care of    | <hr/> |
| <hr/> | bad feelings.   | <hr/> |

Take time for your dialogue below, remembering to use your non-dominant hand for the Inner Child.

|                    |                  |                     |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Inner Child</u> | <u>Aware Ego</u> | <u>Inner Parent</u> |
| <hr/>              | <hr/>            | <hr/>               |
| <hr/>              | <hr/>            | <hr/>               |
| <hr/>              | <hr/>            | <hr/>               |
| <hr/>              | <hr/>            | <hr/>               |

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If you need more space, you might want to continue on an additional sheet of paper. It is important for both you and your partner to come to clear and grounded decisions about whether or not to delve into your pasts at all at this time, even in the relatively light and superficial way you would be doing that here.

If you both are ready and willing to look at more of the childhood contents of your "long bags," use the following directions to continue this exercise, either taking turns reading them to each other or taping them to play back to both of you at the same time.

If either of you decided, for whatever reasons, that this is not the time to examine your past more closely, then skip over to the section titled "Gender and the



Shadow" - and congratulate yourself for paying attention to your inner wisdom and for taking care.

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Sitting in a comfortable position ... tensing and relaxing your muscles, starting at your feet and working slowly up to your face ... slowly tensing and tightening each muscle group ... now relaxing and letting go ... feeling yourself melting and softening ... breathing deeply now ... a few times ... slowly inhaling and exhaling ... now breathing easily and naturally ... picturing a place where you would like to be ... it might be a place you have actually visited, or seen in a picture, or imagined in your mind ... a place that is beautiful and comfortable and free from any intrusion ... a place where you are completely at ease and protected from any harm ... notice your surroundings with all your senses ... looking ... hearing ... smelling ... feeling how you are held securely by whatever you are resting on ... now letting your mind float back to your childhood ... and seeing your child-self first as an infant ... now as a toddler ... letting the images flow ... just floating along with the images ... now seeing yourself at age five ... now between ages five and ten ... and finally around the age of twelve ... now letting your mind float among the images of yourself as a child ... and inviting answers to the following question to come to your mind: "In what ways has this child been hurt

in the first twelve years of life?" Write whatever comes into your mind on the lines below.

Notice your feelings - and any sensations in your body - after doing this writing, and try to put them into words here below.

Now going back to your list of "words, deeds, events, or situations in your current life" that give you your most intense feelings of fear, anger, and sadness - see what connections you can make between these present-day emotional reactions and your hurtful experiences as a child, using the framework below, if it is helpful.

My present-day intense feelings of Fear may (or may not) be connected to the following childhood experience:

My present-day intense feelings of Anger may (or may not) be connected to the following childhood experience:

My present-day intense feelings of Sadness may (or may not) be connected to the following childhood experience:

Review what you've just written, looking for any present-day feelings that relate specifically to your partner, and fill these in below.

My present-day feelings of intense fear, anger, or sadness in response to my partner may (or may not) be connected to the following hurts I experienced in childhood: _____

It is important to keep in mind again that it is all right to speculate and experiment with your responses, and that these exercises do not necessarily prove anything. They are simply intended to point your awareness in the direction of your Shadow, and in particular, to try to show you some of the aspects of your wounded Inner Child that may be reaching out from your "long bag" and influencing your reactions to your partner.

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#### Vulnerability and Power and the Shadow

We might say that the Inner Child and the Inner Parent are both intimately acquainted with the Shadow. Usually having spent large amounts of time out of awareness, these often disowned parts of the self are very familiar with the dark. In an intimate relationship, as we have seen earlier in the The Couples Workbook, most people automatically assume that they are responsible in certain ways for the Inner Child in the partner, and that, in exchange, the Inner Parent of the partner will also take care of their Inner Child.

Another way of describing this process is to say that each partner projects his or her Inner Child onto the other, and reacts to its feelings and needs as if they were



those of the partner. The Inner Parent is also projected onto the partner, which means that the capacity to nurture the Inner Child is transferred to the beloved, and along with it, of course, goes some of the capacity to care for the self.

When essential resources and abilities are disowned and projected - regardless of the joyful or impassioned motivation - the self is left weakened. That is the case for partners engaging in this dance of mutual projection, as blissful as they may be for a little while. A problem arises when both people end up feeling like vulnerable children unable to protect themselves from the powerful parent within the partner, at the same time that each also feels the demand to provide for the partner's increasingly dependent and needy Inner Child the very nurturance he or she wants so much to be able to receive.

Both the vulnerability and the power of the partner are exaggerated by the disowning and projecting of these parts. Because it is either dis-identified with ("I'm tough!") or over-identified with ("Poor me!") - but either way definitely out of awareness in both partners - the scared and vulnerable Inner Child in each gains enormous power to influence their interactions. It is as if the Inner Child resents being abandoned by its own Inner Parent, and so reacts by expressing intense negative emotions or by withdrawal, which generally provokes a

counter-move by the Inner Parent with the intent to control this rebellion and make things right. What is basically an inner battle between essential and disowned aspects of the self gets projected outward, with members of the couple easily falling into dove-tailing roles of rebellious child and controlling parent. The battle of wills that then evolves between the two partners leaves them both unlikely to notice and reclaim their own missing and conflicting parts.

Many of the problems in couple relationships have to do with the Inner Child and Inner Parent being relegated out of awareness and into the Shadow, the simultaneous disowning of both vulnerability and power, and the resulting confusion of inner and outer experiences. Seeking and confronting the Shadow, and bringing these elements back to consciousness is necessary to untangle the interactions and to begin to build intimate partnership between two vulnerable and empowered adults.

How do you experience yourself as particularly vulnerable in your relationship? What kinds of power do you feel your partner has more of than you? Please write your responses to these questions below.

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What kinds of power do you have in relation to your partner? How is your partner particularly more vulnerable than you? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which, if any, of these differences in power is acceptable to you - that is, you do not want or need it to change?

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Which, if any, of these differences in power is NOT acceptable to you? How do you need it to change in order to be more comfortable in the relationship?

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Do any of these power differences put one of you in the position or feeling of a parent and the other in the position or feeling of a child? If so, which ones?

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Will these power differences change if both of you hold to your commitment to taking 100% responsibility for your own Inner Child? If so, which ones might change, and how?

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Gender Difference and the Shadow

Social conditioning also includes on-going lessons about current roles and rules in relation to gender, much of which is usually integrated into the Persona, but at least some of which ends up in the Shadow. What is relegated to the "bag" depends in part on the values of a particular era, but generally includes many tendencies that contradict the prevailing notions of sex-typed attitudes and behavior. It may well be that the more rigid the conceptions of gender propriety are in a given period

or community, the larger the Shadow-bag must be for the disallowed aspects of both women and men.

Although sex-role stereotypes shift with the times, certain elements seem to remain somewhat consistent, especially those having to do with definitions of masculinity and femininity in relation to vulnerability and power. Generally, it is still true that males tend to identify more readily with various forms of power and to relegate vulnerability to their "bag." Females, on the other hand, learn to incorporate vulnerability into the Persona early on, assigning most forms of power safely to the Shadow. Although this arrangement is changing as more and more women win positions of authority and influence in the larger world, and as more and more men seek to develop emotional awareness and sensitivity, it still remains the norm of difference in the private arena of intimate relationships.

Again, the capacities that are relegated to the Shadow are not thereby eliminated. On the contrary, they gain in influence by virtue of being able to affect your feelings and thoughts surreptitiously, through the subterranean route of unconscious manipulations. It is not the case that men, for instance, in their denial of vulnerability actually become invulnerable. Nor is it likely that women, with their aversion to owning power actually avoid exercising it in many different ways.

By asking members of each gender to speak of their experience of the other in relation to these variables, you are almost guaranteed to discover that, in fact, the opposite is true. When women speak openly with other women about their relationships with men, how do they usually describe them? As vulnerable, and requiring a great deal of nurturance, understanding, and patience because of their general avoidance of conflict, the snail's pace of their emotional processing, and the legendary so-called "fragile male ego." And men, when they begin to explore and share their inner lives with each other, as they are increasingly daring to do, what say they of their intimate women partners? They see them as powerful - whether through old-fashioned manipulative wiles or new-honed out-front competencies - or a combination of the two - and often strange and even fearsome in their quick and clear emotional responsiveness.

These are not all new perceptions of "the opposite sex" - born of a liberated age, although they have added fresh dimensions through the emerging collective voice of womanhood in the public arena. Family therapist Frank Pittman, author of Man Enough, reminds his readers of the biblical story of Samson, and Delilah who sheared off his hair and with it his strength in the night, providing a striking example of man's ancient and justified fear of woman's devious and destructive powers. Psychoanalyst and

teacher Jean Baker Miller, in Toward A New Psychology of Women, writes of women's emotional protectiveness toward men as an ages-old requirement for the preservation of (a very dubious form of) social stability.

Certainly, major changes in women's identification with power have occurred as social structures begin to yield to increasing percentages of female participation and even leadership. Well-publicized events such as Anita Hill's courageous emergence from academic obscurity to report to the world Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas's sexual harassment - and the bizarre and wrong yet deeply affecting self-defensive response of Lorena Bobbitt to her husband's chronic emotional, physical, and sexual abuse - have also created possibilities through imagination and action for power to be incorporated into the Persona of women in here-to-fore unknown ways.

Men, too, to some extent, have responded to the growing empowerment of women and their own feelings of confusion about resulting changes in their relationships by attempting to band together with new agendas for their gatherings. Included in their purpose for meeting now is sometimes a kind of intimate sharing that has always been common among women but was often misunderstood and criticized in the past by men: to talk simply and openly about their feelings of vulnerability and their struggles in living.

The Shadow for both genders may be smaller than it used to be, but it still exists, and exerts its pull in relationships between them. You and your partner may want to experiment now with returning to the issue of power and vulnerability, looking this time through the lens of gender difference.

Now, thinking for a moment of your own sense of yourself as a man or a woman, ask yourself first what are the qualities you specifically and proudly associate with your gender (which do not seem to you to be generally typical of the opposite sex), and write these below.

1/ _____	6/ _____
2/ _____	7/ _____
3/ _____	8/ _____
4/ _____	9/ _____
5/ _____	10/ _____

Now, staying focused on your experience as a male or female person, make a list of any of your traits or tendencies that you think of as common to your gender, but feel less proud of.

1/ _____	6/ _____
2/ _____	7/ _____
3/ _____	8/ _____
4/ _____	9/ _____
5/ _____	10/ _____

Now, thinking of the so-called "opposite sex," make a list of strengths or resources you associate with the gender you were not born into.

1/ _____	6/ _____
2/ _____	7/ _____
3/ _____	8/ _____
4/ _____	9/ _____
5/ _____	10/ _____

Now, holding this awareness of the other gender, list some traits and tendencies that you generally assume to be theirs and which make you glad you're not one of them.

1/ _____	6/ _____
2/ _____	7/ _____
3/ _____	8/ _____
4/ _____	9/ _____
5/ _____	10/ _____

Reviewing your list of your own qualities, traits and tendencies, pull out any that have some connection, even if slight, to either category, Vulnerability or Power, and list them in the columns below.

Vulnerability

Power

1/ _____	1/ _____
2/ _____	2/ _____
3/ _____	3/ _____
4/ _____	4/ _____
5/ _____	5/ _____

6/ _____	6/ _____
7/ _____	7/ _____
8/ _____	8/ _____
9/ _____	9/ _____
10/ _____	10/ _____

Now, do the same for your list of qualities, traits, and tendencies of the gender which is not your own, assigning those with any implications of power or vulnerability to the appropriate columns below.

<u>Vulnerability</u>	<u>Power</u>
1/ _____	1/ _____
2/ _____	2/ _____
3/ _____	3/ _____
4/ _____	4/ _____
5/ _____	5/ _____
6/ _____	6/ _____
7/ _____	7/ _____
8/ _____	8/ _____
9/ _____	9/ _____
10/ _____	10/ _____

Having made all your lists, and assuming your partner has made his or hers as well, answer the following questions quickly, without thinking too much about them.

1/ From these lists alone, which do you seem to identify with primarily - Vulnerability, or Power? _____

2/ From these lists alone, which of the two do you seem to most identify with the other gender? _____

3/ Does your primary identification change when you renew your commitment to taking 100% Responsibility? _____

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The next to the last task in this chapter is for you and your partner to look through all your own lists and responses to questions on the Shadow - then to write a brief and very tentative description of your own Persona and and your own Shadow. Include qualities, traits and tendencies that have emerged from your work here as well as thoughts and feelings you may have had prior to using The Couples Workbook. When you have finished writing about these parts of yourself, take a few minutes to speculate on paper about the Persona and Shadow of your partner.

My Persona possibly includes the following qualities, traits, and tendencies: \_\_\_\_\_

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My Shadow possibly includes the following qualities, traits, and tendencies: \_\_\_\_\_

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My Partner's Persona possibly includes the following  
qualities, traits, and tendencies: \_\_\_\_\_

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My Partner's Shadow possibly includes the following  
qualities, traits, and tendencies: \_\_\_\_\_

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Now you and your partner are invited to get up and stand facing each other. Use paper or tape to mark a line at least three feet long between you. Now each of you put one foot forward with your big toe touching the line directly across from each other. You have five minutes to see who can pull the other over onto his or her side, using whatever strategies necessary to accomplish this aim. It is all right to move around on your side of the line, but

your partner will be the winner if both of your feet end up over on his or her side. Set a timer, if possible, so that no one has to watch the clock ... Get ready - get set - GO!

When you have finished, use the lines below to record your experience and any insights you may have in relation to your Shadow.

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### The Chalice and the Blade

#### Too Much History, Too Little Herstory

Now that you and your partner have begun to get some sense of your own personal "dark sides," it will be helpful to know more about a very important part of society's Shadow that weighs heavily on all efforts to build loving and intimate partnerships. This is the part of our collective and individual selves that carries the distorted assumption that gender difference has to translate into one-up and one-down, or, specifically, that males and masculinity are supposedly inherently superior to females and femininity. We all absorb this so-called sexist conditioning from our earliest moments of existence

because its thread is woven into the very fabric of human being, doing, feeling and thinking. There is no way to escape this influence, and its toxic effects on human relations.

It would be unrealistic and irresponsible to try to discuss gender difference or vulnerability and power in intimate relationship without considering more thoroughly the impact of this widespread prejudice on women and men and their efforts to connect with each other. Our first step is a brief detour from the immediate concerns of couples to visit the ancient world. In her ground-breaking and best-selling book, The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future, scholar-futurist-activist Riane Eisler offers an historical explanation of the origins of the seemingly universal tendency to place a hierarchical value on human differences.

Presenting newly validated archeological evidence (via radio-carbon dating) to support her theory, she describes the widespread existence - for thousands of years during the Neolithic period of human evolution - of societies that were very advanced culturally and technologically, yet had no rigid social divisions or institutionalized forms of oppression. Neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, these were Goddess-worshipping communities where women and men lived cooperatively in unity and harmony. Property was held in trust for all by matrilineal

leaders whose concept of power emphasized responsibility for the common good. War and its required defenses and implements of destruction were virtually unknown.

It was not until 5-6000 years ago when invading nomadic Kurgan hords moved in waves from the periphery to what was then the heart of civilization (the Near and Mid-East and parts of Europe), that these peaceful, agrarian-based "Partnership" societies were gradually destroyed, and the "Dominator" form of social organization was imposed.

The original lessons of this new model of human relations included all the tools of body and mind required to support hierarchies of dominance. Weapons (already familiar metals turned to a new use), fortifications, violence and the threat of it, slavery, the polarization of leaders and followers, and the decisive determinant of greater male physical strength allowed wealth and property to be concentrated in the hands of authoritarian rulers. The concept of an armed and angry male god with the power to take life rather than give it provided religious scaffolding and a dramatic contrast to the bare-breasted and animal-accompanied fertility goddesses of the old order.

From this era of pre-history onward to the present day, human differences have been assigned a hierarchical value. Beginning with and founded on male dominance over females, the divisive practice of ranking has extended to

all criteria for social groupings from families to neighborhoods to nations - and including races, ethnicities, creeds, forms of work and play and worship, skin colors, ages, body sizes and shapes, talents and abilities - and on and on - so that all possible variations on the human theme are habitually judged by their one-up or one-down status in relation to others.

According to Eisler, the basis for all forms of social inequality is the denigration of females and the feminine, which originated with the violent conquest of ancient egalitarian Partnership societies. The replacement of the life-giving chalice with the death-dealing blade is the symbol of a fundamental shift in orientation - from an integrative wholistic appreciative attitude toward diversity to an adversarial and competitive stance. Little wonder is it that the current efforts of men and women to relate intimately are still burdened by this ancient antagonism.

Unfortunately, most couples continue to struggle to build intimate and fulfilling partnerships using a framework and mindset that inevitably derive from Dominator conditioning. This is like trying to swim against the tide - out of the belly of the beast! Every institution in our society - government, politics, business, education, medicine, the arts, the sciences, religion, etc. etc. - has evolved out of a systematic over-valuing of males and



masculinity and an under-valuing of females and femininity. As we will soon see more specifically, in relation to theories of human development, Dominator assumptions have distorted the very base of knowledge on which our social structure rests and out of which our so-called progress grows.

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Now you and your partner are invited to get up and stand facing each other. Use paper or tape to mark a line between you. The each of you put one foot forward with your big toe touching the line, just across from each other. You have three minutes to see who can get the other person to cross over the line with both feet. You can use any strategy that will help you, within reason. (If these directions sound familiar, they are, and that is intentional.) Now set your timer and get ready, get set, and GO! When you are done, write below what happened from your own perspective, including how you are feeling.

Now look back at what you wrote the last time you did this exercise (page 285). Notice if there were any changes

either in what happened or in what you wrote, and write about these changes below. Do this before reading on.

So who won? And how did he or she manage to do that? How do you feel? Exhilerated? Deflated? Disgusted? Turned on? Bored? Irritated? Delighted? This was an obviously competitive contest, which required a winner and a loser. By definition, there was no way for both people to be successful. One of the essential lessons of Dominator conditioning is that in every relationship there is a hierarchy, and on any measure of human worth, someone must be "on top." The other equally central teaching is that the one who is least vulnerable, or in other words, most "manly," will prevail. The exercise above is intended as a reminder of what it feels like to have a winner and a loser in your relationship, rather than sharing vulnerability, power and responsibility for your success.

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Here's one more, before we go on. Each of you take a piece of paper and quickly write your answers to the following questions about who has certain kinds of power in your relationship. Put down your first thought.

WHICH ONE OF YOU HAS THE "UPPER HAND" IN RELATION TO:

- 1/ Income \_\_\_\_\_ 2/ Education \_\_\_\_\_
- 3/ Higher status job or career position \_\_\_\_\_
- 4/ Awareness of your children's feelings and needs \_\_\_\_\_
- 5/ Skills related to cooking and nutrition \_\_\_\_\_
- 6/ Skills related to car maintenance and repair \_\_\_\_\_
- 7/ Skills related to clothing maintenance/repair \_\_\_\_\_
- 8/ Skills related to nursing the sick or wounded \_\_\_\_\_
- 9/ Skills related to financial management \_\_\_\_\_
- 10/ Skills related to remembering birthdays, and buying  
appropriate cards and gifts (& wrapping them) \_\_\_\_\_
- 11/ Knowledge of town or city government \_\_\_\_\_
- 12/ Skills related to negotiating a lower price on a major  
purchase \_\_\_\_\_
- 13/ Skills related to food buying \_\_\_\_\_
- 14/ Knowledge of national and world news \_\_\_\_\_
- 15/ Knowledge of relatives' news/views/feelings/needs/  
children's names and ages \_\_\_\_\_
- 17/ Skills related to small appliance repair \_\_\_\_\_
- 18/ Skills related to banking or investments \_\_\_\_\_
- 19/ Knowledge of children's school assignments/needs \_\_\_\_\_
- 20/ Skills related to making a home attractive and  
comfortable \_\_\_\_\_
- 21/ Awareness of when bills are due \_\_\_\_\_
- 22/ Skills related to sports \_\_\_\_\_
- 23/ Skills related to music \_\_\_\_\_

- 24/ Knowledge of family members' clothes/shoe sizes \_\_\_\_\_
- 25/ Physical strength \_\_\_\_\_

Skills, knowledge and awareness are forms of power, as well as money, property and status. Compare your lists 1-25 to see where you have agreement and differences of opinion. Now, go back to your lists and check each item for whether having the upper hand in this area gives power at home in the family - or - out in the larger world, or in both places. Add a notation of (H) for home or (W) for world, depending on where the influence of each form of power is most likely to be experienced. Use the columns below to list the "upper hand" areas (with H's and W's) for each of you.

| <u>Partner #1</u> | <u>Partner #2</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1/ _____          | 1/ _____          |
| 2/ _____          | 2/ _____          |
| 3/ _____          | 3/ _____          |
| 4/ _____          | 4/ _____          |
| 5/ _____          | 5/ _____          |
| 6/ _____          | 6/ _____          |
| 7/ _____          | 7/ _____          |
| 8/ _____          | 8/ _____          |
| 9/ _____          | 9/ _____          |
| 10/ _____         | 10/ _____         |
| 11/ _____         | 11/ _____         |
| 12/ _____         | 12/ _____         |



|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 13/ _____ | 13/ _____ |
| 14/ _____ | 14/ _____ |
| 15/ _____ | 15/ _____ |
| 16/ _____ | 16/ _____ |
| 17/ _____ | 17/ _____ |
| 18/ _____ | 18/ _____ |
| 19/ _____ | 19/ _____ |
| 20/ _____ | 20/ _____ |

At this point, you and your partner might want to use these lists as a jumping-off point for a brief discussion of how each of you values your individual contributions of knowledge, skill and awareness - at home - and how they are valued in the larger world. It might also be interesting to consider these competencies from two possible perspectives - the hierarchical Dominator mind-set, and the collaborative Partnership Way - to see and feel alternative ways of relating to this particular division of powers.

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Challenges to the Dominator Model

It would be difficult for a couple in 1994 to have missed the fact that sexism or male-centered thinking has deeply affected intimate relationships. In the book, American Couples, that resulted from their landmark study of thousands of couples in the mid-1970's, sociologists Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz noted back in 1983

that "the institution of marriage, at least until now, has been organized around inequality, and attempts to change this framework have not been very successful." Although they also acknowledged that twenty years of social upheaval had begun to challenge this arrangement, their research reflected far more widespread questioning of the norm of male dominance by couples than substantial change in relationships.

Fortunately, a number of other researchers, clinicians, psychologists and professors participated in this questioning, and from their serious and scholarly efforts, contributed in major new ways to loosening the grip of Dominator thinking on all our lives. In Toward A New Psychology of Women, mentioned earlier in The Couples Workbook, psychoanalyst Jean Baker Miller wrote in 1976 of the disastrous effects of inequality on relationships between men and women. Highlighting ways that sexist society teaches women to subordinate themselves to men, she exposed the suppressed strength and rising resentment beneath the common smiling feminine mask of adaptability and acquiescence. Although worn to prevent conflict, to promote harmony, and to protect and preserve the masculine sense of dominance, this cover-up, according to Miller, also exacted a price from men. Under this system there could be little possibility of real intimacy between the sexes - because women were hiding, and men were being

fooled - and everyone was ending up diminished and weakened.

Miller makes an important distinction between two types of power: 1/ "Power-Over" - the capacity to control, limit or destroy the power of others, which has been the preoccupation of males, individually and collectively, under Dominator rule - and - 2/ the capacity to implement, to advance one's own development - which is the essence of what women have been denied in Dominator society. Lacking experience with worldly power-over others, women will need to have room to make mistakes in the process of acquiring and learning how to wield it. So far, she observed, women have seemed not to need to diminish or limit the development of others, and their goal has been to integrate self-determination with traditional relational strengths.

Building on the work of Miller and others, Carol Gilligan from Harvard University challenged the major theories of personality development in 1982 in A Different Voice. Contradicting Freud's conclusion that differences in men's and women's development meant females were deficient, she went on to point to the major error of other giants in the field of developmental psychology - Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg - who neglected either to consider their findings on gender difference important enough to explore - or - claimed that their studies of males were valid for everyone! The influence of Dominator

conditioning on the very foundations of the field of psychology was in the process of being revealed.

In her studies of moral reasoning and children, Gilligan found major differences in approach dependent mostly on gender. Boys frequently confronted moral dilemmas with a focus on competing individual rights, logic, principles and rules of fairness. Girls, in contrast, demonstrated concern with responsibility in a context of particular relationships, emphasizing possibilities that involved communication, helpfulness and the least amount of suffering for all involved - a stance that the author labeled an "ethic of care."

A group of four women professors, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, made interviews with women students from a wide range of settings - from inner city community or alternative colleges to elite liberal arts institutions - the basis for their book, Women's Ways of Knowing, which came out in 1986. Here was another major challenge to male dominance through validation of women as thinkers and authorities on their own experience. In addition, their map of stages of development of "self, voice and mind" could be used, among many ways, to explain women's varying responses to Dominator conditioning. These seven stages are summarized below because they can help women in relationships, and possibly men too, to better understand

how they are thinking of themselves in relation to others, especially those in authority in their lives.

Seven Ways of Knowing

- 1/ Silence: passive dependent listening to others; little confidence in their ability to make or express meaning; no real voice of one's own
- 2/ Received Knowing: literal, intolerant of ambiguity, collecting facts, not evaluating ideas or developing opinions; often "black/white" thinking; rely on external authority to know right and wrong
- 3/ Subjective Knowing (I): intuitive or "gut" knowing; looking to oneself as the authority about experience; because of a crisis of trust in male authority and a growing sense that they can know something for sure for themselves; tending to trust others like them, rather than over them; distrusting logic, analysis, abstraction, even language; alienated from science; averse to external influence
- 4/ Subjective Knowing (II): quest for self involves active preoccupation with choosing between self and others; often a pulling away from dominant relational values or contexts in order to act on behalf of self; sometimes isolated and floundering
- 5/ Procedural Knowing - Separated (I): opening to learning from others again, but with the goal of gaining expertise that will help them to know for themselves; experiencing themselves as impersonal or essentially autonomous, seeking mastery of objective material; tough-minded, adversarial, playing the doubting game
- 6/ Procedural Knowing - Connected (II): experiencing themselves as in relationship with the material, intimate with the subject matter; oriented toward understanding; using empathy to feel with the subject in order to more deeply appreciate its meanings
- 7/ Constructivist Knowing: experiencing awareness that all knowing is dependent on context and frame of reference; understanding the value of themselves as learner and thinker and constructor of knowledge or truth; through communion with the subject matter and careful listening to the self - achieving deep

awareness of meanings; empowered expression of
informed well-considered personal truth

Again, it is important to remember about any map or theory that it is really just one way of seeing something. You may or may not be able to use this particular map to better understand yourself or your partner. However, you may find the following exercise helpful in determining whether or not you might be tempted to make anyone in your life - including your partner - your unquestioned authority - instead of claiming your own power to know for yourself what is your truth.

What do you want? That is - what do you want? Or what do you want? Do you know? Let's see right now, what comes to your mind and the mind of your partner in response to this question. Use the left-hand column below to quickly list twenty of your "wants" - without thinking too much about them - in the order they occur to you. Then use the right-hand column to prioritize them - asking yourself which would be the very hardest to give up if you had to - that would be #1 - and working down to the easiest - #20.

<u>I Want ...</u>	<u>My Wants Prioritized</u>
1/ _____	1/ _____
2/ _____	2/ _____
3/ _____	3/ _____
4/ _____	4/ _____

5/ _____
6/ _____
7/ _____
8/ _____
9/ _____
10/ _____
11/ _____
12/ _____
13/ _____
14/ _____
15/ _____
16/ _____
17/ _____
18/ _____
19/ _____
20/ _____

5/ _____
6/ _____
7/ _____
8/ _____
9/ _____
10/ _____
11/ _____
12/ _____
13/ _____
14/ _____
15/ _____
16/ _____
17/ _____
18/ _____
19/ _____
20/ _____

For now, just share your lists, consulting with each other about what parts of your self seem to be represented here. In other words, where are your wants coming from - in terms of the parts of the self we have identified in The Couples Workbook so far? What criteria did you use for prioritizing your list of wants? Who else would benefit if each of your wants were granted? As partners, use your knowledge of each other to help answer these questions, seeking each other's opinions, and writing a little about your conclusions below.

Partner #1 _____

Partner #2 _____

Now, both of you check your lists of wants for the ones having to do with your relationship. Note any of your wants that involve your partner or would require his or her agreement or cooperation or support in order to actually give yourself what you are wanting. Consolidate these into a joint list of wants, using the left-hand column below to record the ones that are important or at least acceptable to both of you. Then, decide together how to prioritize the wants on this joint list, from the most to the least important to both of you, using the right-hand column to record the results.

Joint List of Wants

1/ _____

2/ _____

3/ _____

Joint List - Prioritized

1/ _____

2/ _____

3/ _____

4/ _____
5/ _____
6/ _____
7/ _____
8/ _____
9/ _____
10/ _____
11/ _____
12/ _____
13/ _____
14/ _____
15/ _____
16/ _____
17/ _____
18/ _____
19/ _____
20/ _____

4/ _____
5/ _____
6/ _____
7/ _____
8/ _____
9/ _____
10/ _____
11/ _____
12/ _____
13/ _____
14/ _____
15/ _____
16/ _____
17/ _____
18/ _____
19/ _____
20/ _____

Now, checking back over the description of the Seven Ways of Knowing (page 298), thinking about how you knew your own wants and how you prioritized them, also about your discussions with your partner, how you received and responded to his or her opinions about your wants and about the parts of yourself that were expressed, whether or not you felt understood by your partner, how you decided which wants to include on the joint list, and about your process of prioritizing them together ... now ask yourself:

Which of the seven Ways of Knowing did you use to come to your conclusions about yourself? Which Way of Knowing were you using to work with your partner? Write your answer and a brief explanation below.

The last step in this exercise is for both of you to reflect on the process above asking yourselves two questions: What, if anything, did your Inner Child have to do with your wants and your decision-making process? - and - What, if anything, did gender conditioning have to do with your wants and your decision-making process? Write your responses below.

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### Self-in-Relation

Some of the most basic assumptions underlying reigning theories of human psychological development have been called into question by the work of a group of

experienced clinicians and teachers associated with the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College. For fifteen years, Jean Baker Miller and colleagues Judith Jordan, Alexandra Kaplan, Irene Stiver and Janet Surrey have been collaborating to discuss their ideas and to produce a series of "working papers" describing their important new thinking about women's psychology. A selection of these articles recently gathered into book-form as Women's Growth in Connection has potentially far-reaching implications for both genders, but especially for intimate relationships.

In particular, the authors stress the lack of fit between female experience and prevailing theories of psychological development that emphasize growth in the direction of increasing separation and autonomy. Noting that a male-dominated field studying mostly male subjects has claimed universality for its conclusions, they collectively pose an alternative way of framing development that reflects more of female reality.

What came to be called "Self-in-Relation" theory suggests that the sense of self evolves from the beginnings of life through an interactive process of relationship. Psychological development from infancy onward is seen as involving two-way influence between mother and child, in which each takes an active part in building their connection. Earlier views of this original

bonding considered the infant more of a passive receiver of mother's emotional giving. Here, drawing on the work of Daniel Stern and other recent infant research, the relational process is seen as depending on the presence of at least the basics of two crucial capacities moving between both participants: empathy and mutuality.

Empathy is in essence an ability to perceive the existence of someone other than one's self, and to share in and sense or feel with that other's experience in the moment. To be empathic with someone else is to be able to see life for a moment through their eyes or to "put yourself in their shoes." This skill requires letting go of your own point of view enough to take in the other's way of seeing, feeling and being - but without losing an inner sense of your own separate self. The experience of empathy is based on feeling connected to the other person and having some urge to know and understand them better, and takes a willingness to open your awareness to their differences as well as similarities to yourself.

Mutuality means that both people in a relationship are active and receptive or initiating and responsive, and that both people are open to being influenced by their interactions. Mutuality in the mother-infant relationship refers to various ways that the two communicate and respond to create an exchange of energies that works to satisfy needs in both. This perspective contradicts older



theories that emphasized one-way dependence and development as progress out of this temporary state toward mature separateness and self-determination. The primary on-going goal of development in the Stone Center framework is movement out of individual self-centeredness into increasing awareness of self-and-other, and into greater energy and ability to participate actively in moving relationships forward.

These authors - as well as others who have contributed substantial challenges to the hierarchical Dominator mindset of psychology - are not only departing from traditional developmental theory, but proposing a significantly different alternative model of human relations. They are suggesting with their relational orientation, that from the very first scene until the final curtain falls, mutually enhancing and growth-fostering relationship is the point of the play of life. And - that the key to understanding many of the problems in relationship that plague individuals, couples, families and society may well be found in whatever forces inhibit or restrict the movement of their connections toward embodying greater empathy and mutuality.

Returning to the primary focus of The Couples Workbook, this seems like an appropriate time to invite you and your partner to consider some of the implications of this theory for your own relationship. First of all,

you might want to ask yourselves how you feel about what you've just read, also paying attention to any messages coming through your body's sensations. It is possible that you and your partner have had two very different experiences of this material. Take a minute now for each of you to write a little about your reactions to these ideas on the lines below.

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The following exercise may also help you to clarify part of this chapter's meaning, and assist you in finding the golden needle of practicality in the philosophical haystack.

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Empathy, Mutuality, and Listening

An excellent way to check out how well you and your partner have integrated the concepts of empathy and mutuality into your relationship is the Active Listening exercise. Probably originating with a suggestion made by psychologist Carl Rogers in his 1961 classic work on client-centered therapy, On Becoming A Person, this simple

shared activity can be much more challenging than it might sound.

Jointly choose a place to be in that is comfortable for both of you, and seat yourselves so that you can see and hear each other as well as possible. Decide who will be speaking first and who will be listening. Have a timer handy, if possible, so no one has to watch the clock. Now Speaker #1 will have five minutes to begin to talk about his or her reactions to the chapter you've just read. This can include thoughts, feelings, body sensations - anything about your immediate experience - but avoiding references to past or present issues in your relationship.

It is very likely that when you are practiced and comfortable with this way of talking together, you'll be able to use it to deal with even highly charged matters. But for now, you'll probably get the most out of this exercise by stopping short of feelings directly related to conflicts between you. Try to convey your own fresh responses to the ideas that have been presented, with the goal, not of teaching, changing or helping your partner, but of expressing what is true for you in this moment.

So - set your timer for five minutes, and let Speaker #1 begin. The role of the partner is to act as witness and to practice empathy, to try to hear the essence of two levels of what is being communicated - both the thoughts and the feelings. Remember that you as the

Listener are putting yourself in the Speaker's shoes and trying to see through his or her eyes - not focusing on your own reactions to whatever he or she is saying.

When five minutes have passed, the next step is for the Listener to tell the Speaker the gist of what has been heard. Again, it is important for the Listener to let the Speaker know that both facts and feelings were taken in and comprehended.

The Speaker gets to decide whether or not he or she feels heard and understood. If the Speaker is satisfied that the Listener has really "gotten" the Speaker's meaning, then the timer can be reset and the process repeated another round before switching roles. But if the Speaker feels unheard or misunderstood, he or she goes over again what was said, restating things to help the Listener better grasp the gist of it. Then the Listener makes another effort to accurately paraphrase what was heard.

When the Speaker feels that the Listener has been able to express the essence of what he or she has been trying to say without any major distortion, then you can both be thankful - and switch roles for an equal time period. Although the exercise only involves two five-minute times for speaking, the clarification and re-stating can add alot of time. It's best if you haven't done this at all or very much to hold to a time limit of a half-hour for each Speaker on this practice-run. With these

boundaries, it is more likely that you will avoid getting tangled and have a satisfying experience. The steps of this exercise are summarized below.

- 1/ Have a timer handy
- 2/ Jointly choose a place and seating
- 3/ Decide #1 Speaker and #2 Speaker
- 4/ Set timer for five minutes
- 5/ Speaker #1 speaks of immediate experience of chapter on "The Chalice and the Blade"
- 6/ Listener listens carefully for the gist of the Speaker's thoughts and feelings - putting self in the Speaker's shoes
- 7/ Time is up - Listener paraphrases back to the Speaker the gist of what has been said
- 8/ Speaker says whether or not s/he feels heard and understood

[If Speaker feels understood, skip #9-11, and repeat #5-8 with the Speaker sharing more of his/her responses to the preceding chapter]

- 9/ If Speaker does NOT feel heard, s/he re-states what was said before, to help the Listener understand better
- 10/ Listener listens carefully, then tries again to say the gist of what the Speaker has expressed
- 11/ Speaker responds to the Listener by saying whether or not s/he feels heard and understood this time

[If Speaker still feels misrepresented by how the Listener has described his or her gist, then repeat #9-11, keeping to one-half hour total time for Speaker #1]

- 12/ When Speaker #1 is satisfied that Listener has heard his or her thoughts and feelings, partners can switch roles - start over with step #4 for Speaker #2

When you have finished trading speaking and listening roles, please answer the following questions, individually.

1/ How difficult was this exercise for you?

2/ Did you manage to let your partner speak without interruption for the full three minutes? _____

3/ Did you feel that you really understood the gist of what your partner was trying to say? _____

4/ Were you interrupted by your partner? _____

5/ Did you end up feeling heard and understood by your partner? _____

6/ How well do you think you and your partner did at this exercise? _____

7/ Was what you did here typical of how you respond to your partner when he or she wants to speak to you? _____

8/ If not, how do you usually respond to your partner? _____

9/ Was what happened here typical of how your partner responds to you when you want to speak to him or her?

10/ If not, how does your partner usually respond to you?

11/ Are you willing to practice this exercise to develop more empathy and mutuality with your partner?

12/ If not now, when? If not at all, why not?

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### The Inner Girl and the Inner Boy

#### As the Twig is Bent ... So Grows the Tree

The Stone Center writings define intimacy as impossible without empathy, mutuality and shared caretaking of the connection between two people. A major source of painful imbalance in relationships, these authors point out, can be gender differences in family and cultural conditioning from childhood on around these essential relational elements. While girls are generally raised with

a sense of responsibility for the emotional well-being of their intimate partnerships, boys tend to absorb a very different attitude of entitlement to emotional caretaking and freedom from conflict.

The capacity for feeling with and understanding others - developed in females through reciprocal relating as daughter with mother - and fostered through on-going social conditioning - is still experienced as central to the self-concept and self-esteem of most women. Males, however, have been influenced since at least the age of five, if not sooner, to turn away from their mothers, and what is usually, though not always, the most empathic connection they've ever known, in order to ensure the development of their identification with other men. This disconnection leaves them turning for relational learning to their often absent fathers - who are usually, since they received the same conditioning, lacking the awareness and skills needed for intimacy with their sons. The myth of male self-sufficiency and its resulting emotional isolation is passed like a cold torch to the next generation.

### Dominator Dad

Under the Dominator system of human relations, fathers are required to teach their sons that manhood equals maintaining a one-up position as much as possible, especially in relation to women. Because part of this



lesson involves emphasizing the masculine value of action over talk, most of the learning occurs by example, although lecturing and story-telling are exceptions to this rule. The son, aching for sparsely available emotional contact, hungry for information, and blocked, like the rest of the world, from knowing his father's inner life, soaks up his outer attitudes like a thirsty sponge. In this way, each boy inevitably absorbs Dominator conditioning with its emphasis on hierarchy, distance and control.

There is, as we have seen earlier, a part of the self that remains child-like forever, and contributes rich resources of aliveness to adult life. Although many aspects of this Inner Child are common to both genders, certain elements of its experience and orientation are specifically female or male. For this reason, we are introducing the concepts of the Inner Girl and the Inner Boy. In men, this boy within retains all the capacities for connection that were developed before Dominator conditioning took hold. Usually through his early intimate relationship with his mother, an urge for closeness, along with an openness to fearlessly feeling, needing and expressing, were at least beginning in early childhood to be his own.

But the demand of Dominator conditioning is unrelentingly clear: it is to withdraw from this primary bonding in order to connect with a father who is usually

emotionally unavailable no matter how much he cares. This impossible situation begins the boy's training in disconnection. It also plants in him seeds that will blossom in an aversion to intimacy which, he cannot help but learn, is part of the definition of being a man.

Alongside every man's relationally oriented Inner Boy is a Shadow sub-personality of Dominator-Dad. This is the part he has internalized from his father and others that contains all the Dominator strategies for avoiding a subordinate status in a hierarchical world. Dominator-Dad keeps watch over the Inner Boy, guarding particularly against any impulse to the open expression of vulnerability, ensuring that needs for closeness are obscured behind an appearance of masculine independence.

Knowing that feelings of connection especially could threaten his all-important sense of control, Dominator-Dad denies a man even the right to emotional awareness. He works overtime to preserve this edge in relationship, because it is in intimacy he is most reminded of childhood feelings that predate his Dominator-defined manly separateness and contradict his one-up status. Under the influence of this scared and defensive father within, a man will project this vulnerability onto his woman partner - who usually provides a very convenient "hook." He's then likely to find ways to get her to do the feeling of whatever he can't allow himself to experience, for fear of

sacrificing his upper hand. Always vigilant to retain his position of dominance, he defends against any awareness that could bring him down.

Meanwhile the Inner Boy carries his unsatisfied longings, and sadness, anger and fear about this double loss. Both the outer and inner fathers have proven unable or unwilling to provide for him emotionally - and, for all its rewards of status, the manhood he's supposed to be proud of inheriting stifles his most alive and feeling self.

Stephen Bergman - psychiatrist, teacher, novelist, and playwright - is the first male to be published as an associate of the Stone Center. In his working paper, "Men's Psychological Development: A Relational Perspective," he points out that the very process of being in intimate relationship reminds men of what it was like to be a child under the awesome influence of the mother and brings up what he calls "relational dread."

It is not the woman-as-mother-figure he ends up fearing, but the relational process itself. The demands of intimacy that require faster emotional responsiveness than he is capable of create a sense of inadequacy and incompetence, as well as an inner pressure either to fix this situation fast - or to withdraw for self-protection. When a woman asks, simply: "What are you feeling?" this is very often experienced by men as a demand for something



which elicits resistance in the form of jokes or a change of subject, or at best initiates the slower processing of feelings that is typical of males. Women may experience these responses as false, manipulative, disconnecting or conflict-avoidant, feel hurt or abandoned, and think that the man is blocking, diverting or incapable of intimacy. According to Bergman, a commonly heard female complaint is: "He wants it nice; I want it real!"

In Finding Our Fathers: How A Man's Life Is Shaped by His Relationship with His Father, research psychologist and psychotherapist Sam Osherson acknowledges a paradoxical truth: that men look to their wives to take care of them just as their mothers did when they were boys - but at the same time feel extremely uncomfortable with their needs for nurturance. Because this vulnerability reminds them of the childhood position of dependency on their mothers, which they were supposed to have left far behind in developing separation and autonomy, they do their best to deny it. They then manipulate women to give to them, while managing to avoid all responsibility for asking or receiving their care.

Family therapist Augustus Napier, in The Fragile Bond: In Search of an Equal, Intimate and Enduring Marriage, describes two typical relational maneuvers of men - responding to criticism with a global form of self-blame that guilt-trips the partner or children - and -



"complaining in a martyred kind of way about stresses and needs, with the implication that (your wife) is supposed to make things right for you." Drawing on his learning about gender dynamics through his own experience of couples therapy as a client, Napier also points out that men will often seek a kind of parental nurturance indirectly in negative ways, such as provoking their female partner to nag them for whatever she wants or needs. He also links men's fearful retreat from intimacy and from women's open expression of emotional needs to the effects of fathers' emotional absence or non-verbal presence with their sons in relation to feelings.

In Fire in the Belly: On Being A Man, author Sam Keen writes of the major effect of boyhood learning that "real men were supposed to control their feelings" - a virtual inability to know what he was feeling in later years as a man. Acknowledging the male habit of false optimism that reinforces emotional numbing, he questions its basis in masculine illusions of being "masters of our fate" and "captains of our souls." He welcomes the despair that accompanies challenges to these Dominator-determined aspects of male identity, and insists: "Since boys have been taught not to cry, men must learn to weep."

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Where Oh Where Has My Little Boy Gone?

You and your partner are now invited to take a few minutes for the following exercise. You might take turns reading the directions to each other, or else tape record them to play to both of you at the same time ... Seating yourselves as comfortably as possible ... closing your eyes and breathing deeply ... inhaling all the way into your belly and holding the breath for a moment ... then letting it all go ... feeling your body softening and tension melting away ... breathing easily ... now tightening your lower body - feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs, genitals, buttocks, belly - up to your waist - tightening and holding ... and letting everything go ... inhaling fully and exhaling ... now tightening your upper body - hands, arms, shoulders, chest and back, neck, face and scalp - tightening and holding ... and letting it all go ... feeling the melting ... breathing and deeply releasing ... letting your mind float freely ... now calling up a picture of a little boy - somewhere around the age of four - this little boy can be you at that age, or a young version of the man you are closest to now in your life, or a child you know, or someone in your imagination ... calling up the image of this little boy in as much detail as possible ... his hair and clothes, the expression on his face, his little body and his four-year-old energy ... now seeing

that child with his mother, or some other woman who loves and cares for him ... seeing him talking and laughing with this woman who is smiling and looking into his eyes with love ... now seeing the little boy walk off away from her to play with something ... watching her eyes following him as he goes ... now seeing the boy run back in tears and reach for the woman to show her his hurt finger ... seeing him nestling into her body ... and her holding him and caressing his hair as he cries ... hearing her singing softly to him as his tears wind down ... seeing him perk up and grin and jump down from her lap to play alongside her ... feeling the warm energy flowing between them ... feeling the little boy's sense of trust and safety and connection ...

Now watching in your mind's eye as a man approaches this little boy, calling out to him from a distance ... calling the boy away from his place beside the woman ... seeing the boy get up to go ... seeing him turn back to look at the woman, who smiles and urges him on to join the man ... seeing the boy and the man walking side by side ... seeing the woman watch after them and then turn away as they walk on together ... hearing the man talking as the boy listens ... and now the boy and the man come to a cross-roads ... seeing the man leaving to go to his work ... seeing the boy's sad eyes watching the man until he's gone from sight ... seeing the boy turning back in the

direction of the woman ... feeling his sadness when he realizes she's gone too ... feeling the loneliness of this little boy ... now asking the boy three questions: what does he feel? what does he need? - and where will he go to get his needs met? ... listening for his responses, slowly opening your eyes - and writing what comes into your mind below.

Now ask yourself the following questions:

1/ What are your own feelings about the little boy and his situation? _____

2/ What, if anything, do you wish you could do for the little boy? _____

3/ If you are a man, was this little boy's journey at all like your own? If so, how did you respond to his situation in your own life?

4/ If you are a woman in an intimate relationship with a man, did you imagine him as the little boy in this exercise? Do you know if he experienced this situation in his own life? If you think he did, how do you see him having responded to it, then and now?

Where oh where does the little boy go? The little openly needing, deeply feeling, talking and connecting and connectable-with little boy? Mothers lament their loss of once cherished intimacy with their sons, as the mandates of old theories of development and the rest of Dominator conditioning begin to take hold of his being and doing. The answer may be that the little boy doesn't really go anywhere - except into the Shadow.

From there his presence is out of awareness, but his influence is strong - and emerges most clearly in intimate relationship - in his most delightful form at first, and possibly as a scared, sneaky, selfish manipulator for caretaking later. Only when a man dares to look for his

disowned selves in the "long bag" he's dragging behind him will he be able to face the Dominator-Dad and then reclaim the lost relational riches of the little boy within.

By bringing his fearful, defended, controlling Dominator-Dad into awareness, he'll have access to potentials for intimacy often barely used since early childhood. He may also avoid the pitfall of projecting his resources as well as his vulnerability onto his partner, who will then become more real and possible to know. Through owning the feelings, needs and capacities for relating that reside in the Inner Boy, rather than acting them out unconsciously, he actively participates in building and maintaining the emotional well-being of his relationship. He also helps to heal his own and his partner's Dominator wounds by contributing to their movement toward the emotional mutuality needed for intimate Partnership.

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### Monster-Mom

Under the Dominator system of human relations, females are the mandated keepers of the relational flame, assigned responsibility for emotional sustenance and caretaking of all intimate connections. Part of the job of the designated nurturers is to learn, from their mothers and any other available female role models, the awareness

and skills needed to perform this function. Identification between mothers and daughters allows the early experience of being in relation to provide a foundation for the on-going building of relational competencies in women. Even when the mother-daughter connection is ambivalently experienced - always at least in part due to the daughter's resentment of mother's subordinate status - these womanly strengths continue to grow. Although these requirements make women the usually undisputed intimacy experts in their relationships with men, they also have a negative Shadow side. Some of the non-elective courses in femininity involve learning attitudes of protectiveness toward the Dominator status of males, and the tendency to trade autonomous thinking and being for relational success.

Women can barely avoid - even in this age of vigorous challenges to the Dominator model - internalizing its equation of ideal femininity with automatic knee-jerk nurturing of others, especially of their intimate partners. At the same time, there is no way to escape absorbing the insistent and systematic devaluing of everything female - including their special strengths - which is an inevitable part of the socialization of every child. The Persona of each woman contains her own particular strategies for accomodating and surviving this destructive reality through at least appearing to submit to its dictates. But in her Shadow lie aspects of herself that could threaten this

adaptation, including parts of her that predate and defy her submission and carry her capacity for self-hood as well as her will to power.

As we have seen, in a Dominator society, each person is valued hierarchically, always defined as one-up or one-down in relation to others. Children learn their positions in the gender hierarchy early - gender identity is said to be somewhat established at two years old, with gender-specific toy selection occurring by the age of three - so girls are absorbing lessons about empathy and self-sacrifice in the name of feminine relational competence at the same time that boys are getting the message that they will need to be pulling away from these seemingly non-masculine concerns.

Since the Dominator model idealizes the caretaking role while also relegating it to females and thereby demeaning it - there is some social reward for women who incorporate it as a primary part of their identity. This priority also provides one relatively private arena for the possible exercise of interpersonal power - in intimate relationships. Out-of-awareness resentment or even rage at her devalued status combines with her own life-long exposure to toxifying hierarchical attitudes to produce fertile ground for growing a Shadow sub-personality that wills to and may even thrive on power-over others - in other words, an inner Dominator self.



Frances Wickes, in The Inner World of Childhood, writes of the will-to-power which Jung proposed as the Shadow side of love. She describes how it can manifest through the mothering of children as well as in the forms of parenting that women often unknowingly project onto their husbands or intimate partners (who often unknowingly invite or even require it). This is a kind of Monster-Mom that takes too much responsibility for other people's lives, assuming to know all that is in their best interests, making their needs her own, and in some cases, "helping" her family members to death - literally - by denying their right to boundaries or individual separate existence. Investing too much of her sense of self in the nurturing role, she becomes the Inner Parent for everyone, especially her partner, and fosters over-dependency in others rather than encouraging self-responsibility. Her partner is then enabled to remain in a child-like position in their intimate relationship, which never moves toward emotional mutuality. As long as she is primarily focused on providing for his Inner Boy, the needs of her own Inner Girl are sorely neglected.

Monster-Mom is a flip-side of the powerlessness that is built into the identities of females in a Dominator society that permanently ranks their inherent worth second to that of males and interprets their differences - including their strengths - as defects and deficiencies.

So-called "care-taking" is one arena, albeit within the private domain of the home (or in other family-like structures), in which women are allowed - rather, required in many ways - to "dominate." Superior skills and awareness as well as almost total responsibility for their partner's (and children's) emotional and physical well-being are generally expected of women - by women as well as men. And although they tend to be more criticized than praised (with the exception of a minor annual holiday) for their expertise, their power - in the best sense of Jean Baker Miller's definitions - i.e., to implement growth and development, healing and positive change in those within this intimate circle (or not) - is very real.

The Dominator model of human relations instills winner/loser thinking - and makes "winning" in most public arenas dependent on competitive Dominator games at which men are still far more practiced and likely to succeed. For some women who are awake to the lack of a level playing field and willing to confront this reality in themselves and the world directly, open conflict with the inner and outer Dominators contributes to their sense of authentic individuality and lessens their susceptibility to Shadow strategies for gaining power. But women secretly seething and suffering from the effects of their secondary position still have one major weapon available out of awareness to meet their hidden need to get "on top." Out of their

Shadow arsenal they can call up the fiercely over-responsible and potentially invasive Monster-Mom, who can have very real impact in the lives of her loved ones, even when - or especially because - most other forms of power are denied her. She may then use her life-long training in feeling her own and everyone else's inner state - ostensibly to serve - but unconsciously to meet her understandable need for the experience of power-over in order to define a sense of self in Dominator terms - through influencing or controlling others. This, however, is not a route to any kind of victory.

Her assigned role of subordination in the Dominator system still requires that woman measure her individual worth in terms of her skill and success in building and maintaining relationships, regardless of her worldly achievements. This is only slightly less true during the current period of effective challenges to Dominator attitudes and widespread re-valuing and reclaiming of female-honoring Partnership ways. Now that women's traditional relational orientation is being "discovered" as the basis for badly needed change in struggling social structures based on hierarchy and control, there are more avenues for female empowerment in the world. However, the division of emotional responsibility within the home, and especially in intimate relationships with men, remains largely the same.

Being "empathy-sick" - Gloria Steinem's term in The Revolution Within for the state "of knowing other people's feelings better than my own" - or Too Good for Her Own Good, as Claudia Bepko and Jo-Ann Krestan call it in their book by the same name - does not allow a woman to experience any other kind of power except in the intimate context. Even there, it doesn't guarantee her an equal role in major decision-making. In relation to the rest of the world, this preoccupation with taking care of everybody else is, regardless of what it does or doesn't do for others, a conditioned form of self-sacrifice and self-victimization that women are programmed for in Dominator society. Monster-Mom may be drawn out, demanded, and in many ways reinforced by her partner, or she may be unwelcome and doing more harm than good, but the cost of her unconscious Shadow rule is overwhelmingly to the woman herself.

It is Monster-Mom who has dutifully absorbed the Dominator definitions of her required functions and her devalued worth. A woman's constant companion, Monster-Mom has only one predictable response to her problems in relationship, especially with an intimate partner: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE AND IT'S YOUR JOB TO MAKE THIS RELATIONSHIP WORK! Whether the couples issue she struggles with is unilateral decision-making, unfair distribution of housework or child-care, her partner's infidelity,



alcoholism, emotional/physical/sexual battering, or child sexual abuse - Monster-Mom is as clear as Dominator culture about who is to blame. She is the guardian watchdog, faithfully preserving male dominance, ensuring that most of a woman's pain and anger about her subordinate status - in spite of occasional outbursts - will be turned inward against herself, rather than into constructive action.

Women, of course, must look into their "long bags" for the ways their life force, still often blocked by Dominator influences from flowing fully into the creation and fulfillment of a valued and socially supported individual self, seeks expression through exercising parental power-over the Inner Child of their partners in particular. Otherwise, they are all too likely to waste their creative energy in excessive and counter-productive caretaking. This conditioned preoccupation can preclude the possibility of awakening and reconnecting with the source of women's true empowerment - their own integrated, vital, self-determining and deeply relational Inner Girl.

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Awakening the Real Sleeping Beauty

You and your partner are now invited to take a few minutes for the following exercise - either using a tape recorder or taking turns reading the directions to each other ... Now seating yourselves comfortably and closing your eyes ... breathing deeply several times ... taking the

breath into your belly and blowing up like a balloon ...
holding your breath a moment, then letting it go ...
feeling the tension oozing out of your body ... seeing it
go out of you in waves ... now tightening your lower body's
muscles and moving upward ... feet, ankles, calves, knees,
thighs, genitals, buttocks, belly - tightening, holding,
and letting go ... feeling the melting and softening ...
now tensing your hands, arms and shoulders - your back,
chest, neck, face and scalp ... tensing and holding, then
letting go ... breathing and releasing ... Now calling from
your mind a picture of a little girl ... a girl about eight
years old who is happy at play ... she can be an image of
you at eight, or another woman's younger self, or a child
you know or have seen, or one from your imagination ...
seeing her in as much detail as possible - her face and
hair and clothes, her body and eight-year old energy ...
now imagining this girl quite full of herself ... radiant
with purpose ... moving easily among her various activities
and connections ... curious, expansive, adventurous and
bold ... exploring and trying to understand the physical
world ... listening closely to grown-ups to learn about
relationships ... playing out family scenes she has
witnessed with her dolls ... sensitive and dramatically
expressive ... competent and spirited ... running, jumping,
climbing trees, always on the go ... putting on plays ...
collecting and organizing things ... loving to talk and

boistrously energetic ... now letting your mind time travel with this little girl ... moving along over three years to the age of eleven ... noticing ways she has grown and how she is changing ... taller now, and changing shape ... the beginnings of breasts more or less visible ... and she's either displaying them proudly - or hunching her shoulders a little ... maybe wearing pierced earrings or fingernail polish ... and pointy-toed dress shoes on her feet ... she's more self-conscious when she moves, and less fluid and graceful ... more held in, less confident ... but smiling politely ... watching and listening for her cues ... now holding these images of the girl and her changes ... feeling the shifts in her body and mind ... now asking this girl these three questions: how is she feeling? what is she needing? - and what will she do to get her needs met? ... listening for her answers - then slowly opening your eyes, and writing what comes to your mind below.

Now ask yourselves the following questions:

1/ What are your own feelings about the little girl and her changes? _____

2/ What, if anything, do you wish you could do for this little girl? _____

3/ If you are a woman, did you go through changes like this little girl's? If so, how did you respond to this situation in your own life? _____

4/ If you are a man in an intimate relationship with a woman, did you imagine her as the little girl in this exercise? Do you know if she experienced this kind of transition in her life? If you think she did, how do you think she responded to it, then and now? _____

The real sleeping beauty is the Inner Girl of eight - for whom life was an integrated pursuit of competencies and pleasures, some relational and some individual, with no torturously compelling distinctions between the two. For her, Dominator conditioning had not yet knocked her

unconscious in the process of dividing her against herself and against the woman-judging world. She had not yet learned to be a watchful and pleasing subordinate compulsively attuned to the feelings of others and asleep to her own authority.

This little eight-year-old girl within is a positive Shadow side of woman, carrying her potential for being an authentic self-in-relation. By looking into their "long bags," and being willing to face the disowned parts of themselves, women may well find an amazingly resourceful part of themselves who has a firm foothold in both gender camps. The Inner Girl is grounded in her sense of a separate self pursuing individual fulfillment - as males are supported in doing in Dominator society - and - is building a solid foundation of the traditionally feminine relational awareness and skills. When a woman is attuned to her girl within, and consciously committed to her well-being, the negative Shadow figure of Monster-Mom is far less likely to be expressed in relationships - because feeling with and for others will be balanced by empathy for the self.

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Please Note: We are dealing alot with gender difference in The Couples Workbook, and often refer to masculine or feminine tendencies or parts of the self. It is important to be aware that although gender identity and gender

conditioning do influence and differentiate all of us in powerful and subtle ways, no one is a pure gendered type. We all contain many parts of the self, including cross-gender elements. Males and females have an Inner Girl and an Inner Boy - although they are both quite relational and self-determining and may sometimes be hard to distinguish, as well as Monster-Mom and Dominator-Dad - who are obviously very polarized sex-role stereotypes. Some of your other subpersonalities are distinctly masculine or feminine, and others embody qualities not linked to either gender. The Couples Workbook emphasizes that the dimension of gender is important to consider in relation to the Inner Child, as well as the Inner Parent. Our intention, however, is to challenge Dominator-defined differences, and hopefully to expand the possibilities of both women and men to restore or discover more of themselves.

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Crucial Commitment #2

You and your partner are now invited to ask yourselves if you are ready to make another important commitment. First, consider the following summary of some of our ideas so far.

The first commitment you made was to taking 100% responsibility for your own Inner Child. Since then, we have explored various aspects of the Shadow, including some connected with gender difference. We've looked at how

thousands of years of Dominator conditioning have affected thinking about the sexes, vulnerability and power, as well as the fundamental relationship between women and men. We have also considered some of the challenges to this distorted hierarchical thinking that has valued males over females, and hinted at possibilities of an alternative Partnership model of relationship honoring both genders.

We've learned about Dominator-Dad and listened to men's voices about their Shadow fears and their manipulations for caretaking. We've paid attention to how women's Shadow power-hunger can play out paradoxically in reaction to assigned inferiority as a self-destructive Monster-Mom in intimate relationships. And we've uncovered two valuable resources of the gendered inner children - the relational potential of the Inner Boy and the potential for integrating relational importances and individually oriented pursuits in the Inner Girl.

The second crucial commitment involves two parts: a further untangling of the Inner Parents and the Gendered Inner Children - and a willingness to continue working on developing awareness about the effects of Dominator conditioning - on yourself and on your relationship.

As we have seen, men are Dominator-conditioned to disown the vulnerability, feelings and needs of the Inner Boy - and to project these onto women, especially in an intimate relationship, thereby avoiding responsibility for

their own self-nurturance. Women, on the other hand, are Dominator-conditioned to empathize with everyone but themselves, and to accept over-responsibility for caring for others, especially their intimate partner. While men are covertly maneuvering women to nurture the Inner Boy they deny having, women are too readily taking over the Inner Parent's role, providing emotional caretaking, and disowning their own Inner Girl.

In this way, both genders are cut off from parts of themselves that contain essential elements of their aliveness, their vulnerability, and their power. In addition, their painful polarization is reinforced, as women must maintain emotional connections if they are to exist at all, and men continue to avoid responsibility for their own nurturance and for the well-being of their intimate relationships. Under these conditions of inequality, movement toward the empathic mutuality of true partnership is highly unlikely.

In other words, both men and women must commit to deepening their understanding of how Dominator conditioning has affected the Inner Parent and Inner Child of each. They need to develop their awareness of how men's conditioning toward dominance and women's conditioning toward subordination distorts inner parent/child dynamics, as well as their outer relationship. And each needs to take 100% responsibility again, this time specifically for

their own Inner Girl and Inner Boy. Sooooo ... ask
 yourselves if you are ready and willing - to make Crucial
 Commitment #2 ... noticing any resistance and putting it
 into words below ... "I'm not ready or able to make this
 commitment now because ... "

However, I do want to make this commitment now because ...

Therefore, in light of your excellent reasons for doing it,
 and taking your reservations into consideration, but not
 being stopped by them - copy the following affirmation of
 your sincere intention onto the lines below:

"I, _____, commit myself to taking 100%
 responsibility for learning more about how Dominator
 conditioning has affected me and my partner and my ability
 to nurture my own Inner Girl or Inner Boy."

Partner #1 _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Partner #2 _____

Signed _____ Date _____

The next step is for each of you to think of at least a couple of concrete practical ways that you will follow up on this commitment with action. Discuss these together, asking your partner if your plan sounds realistic, and if he or she believes you might actually do what you're intending. Continue to work on this until you both have plans that you both can believe in, and write your action plans below.

Partner #1 _____

Partner #2 _____

The Partnership Way for Couples

Neither Patriarchy Nor Matriarchy

The Partnership Way is the name Riane Eisler and her husband David Loye have given to the book which presents their vision of an alternative to the Dominator model of human relations. Based on the peaceful, cooperative and non-oppressive societies of prehistoric Europe and of ancient Crete in particular (discussed in Eisler's The Chalice and the Blade), their conception requires the equal valuing of the sexes and of femininity and masculinity. The reduction of current social problems and the increase of harmonious functioning on all levels, including that of couple relationships, is dependent on the restoration of traditionally female values of empathy, caring, mutuality and non-violence to a place of honor and respect.

You and your partner are now invited to think for a moment about your history together so far - each of you looking back for a memory of an activity you shared that ultimately went well for both of you, and through which you accomplished something neither of you could have done alone. When you're ready, write your memory below.

Next please answer the following questions, each of you separately at first:

How did you manage to collaborate successfully? Was it relatively easy or difficult? What do you think were the obstacles to collaboration? What was the combination of needs in each of you that made the effort to collaborate worthwhile? What were the strengths that each of you contributed? _____

Now share what you've both written and compare your explanations of how your collaboration happened, then answer the questions below:

Do you have similar or different explanations of what worked and what didn't? How do you feel about the similarities or differences? _____

Are there any differences between your explanations that might have to do with your genders? If so, please explain.

In your opinion, did gender have anything to do with why your collaboration was successful? Did gender have anything to do with the obstacles you had to overcome?

Did your collaboration represent a Dominator or Partnership mode of interaction, or have elements of both?

Some of the essence of the transformation of attitudes needed to move from the Dominator to a Partnership model of interaction are contained in the following lists of key words and concepts from Eisler and Loye's The Partnership Way.

Dominator Model

fear
win/lose orientation
power over
male dominance
control
ranking
one-sided benefit
manipulation
destruction
hoarding
codependency
violence against others

Partnership Model

trust
win/win orientation
power to do/power with
gender partnership
nurture
linking
mutual benefit
open communication
actualization
sharing
interdependency
empathy with others

taking/giving orders
 alienation
 secrecy
 coercion
 indoctrination
 conquest of nature
 conformity
 difference = one-down
 masculinity = domination
 femininity = subordination
 cooperation based on fear
 & aggression
 freedom for a few
 woman is idealized or
 debased
 conflict is emphasized and
 violently suppressed

 people treated as means
 quantity of possessions
 substituted for human
 relations
 power-over becomes an
 addiction
 the Earth = object to
 use & exploit

working in teams
 integration
 openness/accountability
 participation
 education
 respect for nature
 creativity
 celebration of diversity
 masculinity & femininity
 both = active & passive
 cooperation based on
 trust & reciprocity
 freedom for everyone
 woman is full-fledged
 human being
 conflict is recognized,
 used for learning and
 resolved creatively
 people treated as ends
 quality of human relations
 & goods emphasized

 mutual support contributes
 to self-esteem
 the Earth = living thing
 everyone is part of

The Partnership Way is not about putting down men and masculinity in order to raise up women and femininity. Although the ancient Partnership societies were Goddess-worshipping and matrilineal - mothers rather than fathers carried the line of descent - these particular differences apparently did not translate into women's exploitation of men. The system simply did not have rigid social divisions or practice the hierarchical valuing of human differences, and that is part of what is being proposed here. The two lists of words and phrases above are not meant to represent gender differences, but to describe ways of thinking, feeling, being and doing that derive from two very different models of human relations.

Please take a few minutes now for each of you to look over the list above and write below any areas of your intimate relationship that might need some special attention and effort to move out of Dominator patterns toward the Partnership Way. _____

~~~~~

### Cross-Cultural Communication

One dimension of couple relationships that is strongly affected by Dominator conditioning is communication. In her best-selling book, You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation, sociolinguist Deborah Tannen describes how gender difference influences conversational style and substance. One of the major differences she points to is in assumptions about human relations: men seem to believe more than women that hierarchy is an unavoidable dimension of interaction, whereas women tend to assume their participation in a web of connection. This translates into a male tendency to listen for the status message in any communication, and a preoccupation with which person in a dialogue is one-up or one-down. Women, on the other hand, are generally concerned with promoting intimacy, and avoiding

disconnection. This puts them at odds with men's wariness of a closeness that might somehow threaten their independence and thereby their status.

Communication around issues related to helping is especially complicated for men and women by these conflicting predispositions. Oriented to nurturing, women tend to respond with concern to a man who seems distressed, but the man is likely to interpret this straightforward attention as a condescending put-down rather than an empathic gesture. Men, on the other hand, are far more comfortable giving help than receiving it, especially if it also allows them to demonstrate knowledge and skill.

Tannen points out that there is a mixed message in helping - a behavior that is both a gift or a service and an act that can imply the superiority of the helper. But this is less of a problem for women, whose assumption of connectedness often overrides awareness of this possible status dimension. In addition, since women are already in a subordinate position in sexist society, they may also be more accustomed to being one-down and notice or fear conversational domination less.

Protectiveness is a form of helping that comes naturally to many women, and is also easier for them to receive. Men are generally averse to any open expression of this form of tenderness because it serves to remind them of little boy feelings of intimacy with mother, and once



again communicates primarily a message about their inferior status. This aversion may be part of why men find it hard to respond to women's sharing of feelings with the empathy and understanding they so much desire. Offering unwelcome fix-it advice instead of expressions of connected caring, males are often dismayed at females' frustrated response.

Overall, communication between the sexes requires a good deal of translation of verbal and non-verbal messages that carry meanings for men about independence and for women about intimacy. Each is listening in part for reassurance about the quality of connection - but the primary need for men is for a position of dominance - which protects them from being dominated - and for women it is for signs of closeness and care. Understanding their differences as valid expressions of unavoidable gender conditioning allows a friendlier perspective to prevail. Framing the challenges as predictable aspects of "cross-cultural communication" may help couples to move toward the Partnership Way.

~~~~~

Just as an experiment, you and your partner might each make a short list of things you'd like your partner to help you with, if he or she would. Then each choose one particular task or activity that you are willing to talk about with your partner. Set aside a certain amount of time - say fifteen minutes each - to express your need for

help and hear your partner's response to you. If at all possible, tape record these conversations. Otherwise, take notes afterwards, trying to recall the gist of what happened and as much of the verbal and non-verbal exchange as possible. Some time later, listen to your tape or check your notes, and share your impressions of similarities and differences in your attitudes toward seeking and giving help. Note these on the lines below.

Checking back over the list of words and concepts associated with Dominator and Partnership models of human relations (pages 342-43), ask yourselves: what, if any, Dominator elements appeared in the discussions above? What were your Inner Girl and Inner Boy feeling during this exchange? What were your Inner Parent's responses? Did your conversations embody an appreciation of your "cross-cultural" differences in communication style and substance that reflect movement toward the Partnership Way?

"Marriage is not comfortable and harmonious," writes Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig in Marriage Dead or Alive.

"Rather," he continues ...

it is a place of individuation where a person rubs up against himself and against his partner, bumps up against him in love and in rejection, and in this fashion learns to know himself, the world, good and evil, the heights and the depths.

Do you agree with this quotation? How do you feel about it? Are you comfortable with it - or is it "bumping" you?

"Marriage is not comfortable and harmonious," writes Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig in Marriage Dead or Alive.

"Rather," he continues ...

it is a place of individuation where a person rubs up against herself and against her partner, bumps up against her in love and in rejection, and in this fashion learns to know herself, the world, good and evil, the heights and the depths.

Do you agree with this version? How do you feel about it?

"Marriage is not comfortable and harmonious," writes Adolf Guggenbuhl-Craig in Marriage Dead or Alive.

"Rather," he continues ...

it is a place of individuation where a person rubs up against himself or herself and against his or her partner, bumps up against him or her in love and in rejection, and in this fashion learns to know himself or herself, the world, good and evil, the heights and the depths.

Hello again. How do each of you feel about this one?

Whether or not you agree with his thoughts about marriage, do you see that the last version of Guggenbuhl-Craig's quotation is the only one to make very certain that the relationship he writes of is intended to be a place of growth and learning for both individuals? The common usage of masculine pronouns to refer to both women and men blatantly symbolizes and reinforces the Dominator gender hierarchy. You and your partner might want to consider and discuss what this habit says to your Inner Girl and Boy. You might also ponder the possibility that taking the trouble to regularly communicate your commitment to the equal valuing of females might be a small price to pay for a major contribution to the Partnership Way.

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### Courageous Creative Conflict

In The Magic of Conflict, educator, martial artist and conflict resolution specialist Thomas Crum notes that he has encountered two prevailing myths about conflict that interfere with its resolution. Myth #1 is that conflict is negative and unnecessary, instead of being a natural part of life that can help bring about needed change. Myth #2 is that conflict equals a contest in which there must be a winner and a loser - instead of an opportunity to engage with difference that might lead to learning and growth for all concerned.

As Jean Baker Miller points out in Toward A New Psychology of Women, woman's subordinate position and primary role as nurturer have led to her habit of suppressing conflict by accomodating, mediating, adapting, and soothing, in order to keep peace in intimate relationships. In fact, as the Stone Center's Judith Jordan has also noted, when women do dare to initiate conflict by asserting their differences, the response of men has often been to label their thoughts and feelings "distorted" or "sick" because of the possible threat to their established dominance. Men's fear of the demands and intensity of emotional intimacy, described earlier by Stephen Bergman as "relational dread," contribute to their avoidance of direct and open dealing with differences. In addition, the vulnerable Inner Boy in men and the

compulsively caretaking Monster-Mom in women are often locked in a codependent entanglement that prevents mutually vigorous adult engagement.

But the clash of differences is inherent in relationship, an unavoidable aspect of two-ness - and of human nature and life itself - unless one person (or both) succumb to the temptation to sacrifice inner truth for false harmony. The Partnership Way does not mean to obliterate difference, but to transform the Dominator habit of hierarchical valuing into a balanced appreciation of diversity - which will allow natural friction to spark new forms of creativity.

"In my experience," writes John Welwood in The Journey of the Heart: Intimate Relationship and the Path of Love, "the greatest obstacle to growth in a relationship is ... "

a couple's belief that "it shouldn't be this hard." Yet the reason it often is hard is that we are set in our ways, and it takes great energy and dedication to break free of them.

We need courage to do what Jean Baker Miller calls "waging good conflict" - with the potentially illuminating differences in our intimate relationships, and with the difficult parts of ourselves.

It may be especially helpful to stay aware of the Shadow elements of your Inner Parents, which are likely to come into play when conflict arises. The Monster-Mom aspect will be tempted to suppress the emergence of

difference in the interest of protecting the relationship - whereas Dominator-Dad will be similarly inclined in order to preserve his upper hand. Good, productive conflict will also involve the Inner Children, who often express their feelings very directly and without reservation. The role of the Aware Ego is crucial in balancing attention to immediate intensity with concern for the relationship and resolution - as well as in preventing Dominator attitudes in both people from turning the interaction into a competitive struggle.

The following exercise is intended to be an experiment for you and your partner to increase your awareness of the parts of you that come into play when you are in conflict. It takes some patience, but will be worth the effort if it helps you to become more conscious and capable of using conflict to learn and grow. Each of you are invited to take ten 8x11 pieces of paper, and write on five of them, one name per sheet - Inner Girl, Inner Boy, Monster-Mom, Dominator-Dad and Aware Ego. Now, stand facing each other about three or four feet apart, pretending there's a line between you - and lay those papers along that imaginary line on the floor across from each other. Have a timer handy, as well as the other papers and a pen or pencil.

Think for a moment about conflicts that are fairly fresh between you, with the purpose of choosing one for

your focus. If you can come easily to a joint decision about one conflict to deal with in this exercise, then do that. If not, your conflict about which conflict to use might be a good choice. Decide also who will be Speaker #1 and who will be Speaker #2.

OK - Speaker #1 - before speaking - go to the paper for the Aware Ego and ask yourself which one of the other parts represented in the papers on the floor wants to speak first about this conflict. Remember that the Aware Ego hears and judges not, but is fair-minded and concerned that each part make its contribution. You might want to close your eyes and just listen for which voice emerges. Or you might want to try standing at each of your papers to see if that helps. In any case, as soon as one part is ready to speak, go to the paper with its name and let it say its piece - within a two minute time limit.

Now Speaker #2 - your job is first to set the timer for Speaker #1 and then to listen carefully - taking notes on your other sheets of paper to record the gist of your partner's meaning.

Speaker #1 - after letting the first part speak, choose another part - you'll be giving each one a chance - so just feel which one is ready next, and go to that paper. When Speaker #2 has set the timer for another 2 minutes, go ahead and talk about your conflict from the perspective of this part. Speaker #2 will continue to take notes.



Continue like this until Speaker #1 has spoken from all four parts. Then Speaker #1 goes back to the paper for the Aware Ego and summarizes the gist of what each one said, with Speaker #2 still taking notes.

Then switch roles, so that Speaker #2 is talking from each of the four parts, and Speaker #1 is listening and taking notes. After Speaker #2 goes to the paper of the Aware Ego - and from there summarizes the gist of what each of his or her parts were expressing, then each offers the other a summary of what's been said - standing in the place of the Aware Ego and saying "I hear that \_\_\_\_\_ part of you feels X or thinks Y ..."

And, as in the previous exercise on Empathy, Mutuality and Listening (page 308) - each lets the partner know whether or not the parts that spoke feel heard, and steps are repeated until both feel satisfied that they are understood. These steps are summarized and listed below.

- 1/ Ten 8x11 sheets of paper for each partner
- 2/ Write one of these names on each of five of the sheets:  
Inner Girl, Inner Boy, Monster-Mom, Dominator-Dad,  
Aware Ego
- 3/ Stand facing each other three or four feet apart, as if a line is between you, and lay your papers across from each other along that imaginary line
- 4/ Have a timer and each have a pen or pencil and your other five sheets to write on
- 5/ Think for a moment about conflicts that are fairly fresh between you, and make a joint decision about one for your focus - or - if you can't agree on a choice, use this disagreement as your focus

- 6/ Decide who will be Speaker #1 and Speaker #2
- 7/ Speaker #1 stand next to paper for the Aware Ego and ask yourself which of the other parts (IG,IB,M-M, D-D) wants to speak first about this conflict
- 8/ Go to the paper for that part and speak for the feelings in that part of you (maximum of two minutes timed by Speaker #2)
- 9/ Speaker #2 listens carefully and takes notes on the gist of what Speaker #1 is saying
- 10/ Speaker #1 chooses another part to speak next, then allows each part to speak, repeating #8 and #9 for each
- 11/ Speaker #1 goes back to the Aware Ego and briefly summarizes the feelings of each of his or her parts, with Speaker #2 still taking notes
- 12/ Switch roles, so that Speaker #2 is talking and Speaker #1 is listening and taking notes
- 13/ Speaker #1 offers Speaker #2 a summary of what (#2) has said - from the Aware Ego - referring to each part or subpersonality of Speaker #2, and to whatever was expressed from the Aware Ego
- 14/ Speaker #2 tells Speaker #1 whether or not he or she feels heard and understood
- 15/ As in the exercise on Empathy, Mutuality and Listening (page 308), steps are repeated until Speaker #2 is satisfied that Speaker #1 has heard and understood
- 16/ Speaker #2 offers Speaker #1 a summary of what (#1) has said - following the same format
- 17/ Speaker #1 tells Speaker #2 whether or not he or she feels heard and understood
- 18/ As above (#15), Speaker #2 attempts to paraphrase #1's thoughts and feelings again, getting feedback from Speaker #1 until #1 feels heard and understood

The last step in this exercise is for both of you to answer the following questions in relation to your

particular conflict, writing your responses below - and sharing them when you both have finished.

1/ What is your most important priority in relation to this issue, the one aspect of your perspective you most need to be appreciated, respected and incorporated in the solution? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2/ What is your partner's most important priority in relation to this issue, the one aspect of his or her perspective he or she most needs to be appreciated, respected and incorporated into the solution? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3/ What possible solution(s) to the problem can incorporate both of your most important priorities?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4/ Will any part or parts of your self be left out by resolving your conflict as described in #3? If so, how could you individually take these needs into consideration?

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5/ Would any part or parts of your partner be left out by the resolution(s) described in #3? If so, how might you assist your partner in responding to these needs?

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6/ Are there any reasons not to resolve this conflict? If you and your partner actually succeed in moving through it, what might happen? \_\_\_\_\_

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This structure, though a bit unwieldy, can be applied to all sorts of couples conflicts, and can be expanded to include other parts of the self. Working within this framework allows a balanced expression of extremes - the intense emotional reactions of the Inner Children - and the distorted parental attitudes of over-involvement and dominance, which when mediated by the Aware Ego in both



partners, can yield the good-enough grounded aliveness and clarity of a possible middle road to conflict resolution.

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Traveling Well Together

Couplehood is often called a journey, with intimate partners described as traveling companions embarking toward an unknown destination. From the initial attraction to each other until the emergence of differences and inevitable power struggles, most people are flowing with forces that are beyond their understanding and out of their control. As we have seen, the Inner Child has a great deal to do with this part of the relationship process. Other parts of the self emerge from the Shadow to make their important contributions as well.

Once romantic excitement has turned to open or covert repetitive conflict, every couple is at a point of decision. Whether, first, to go on together or to part and then, sooner or later, to start over with someone else. If there is enough that is positive about their connection, they will persist, but often in frustrating patterns of interaction that leave both of them doubting and blaming each other and themselves.

The emphasis in The Couples Workbook has been on the importance of using this crisis as an opportunity for individual learning and growth, which can also free the couple relationship from its stuckness and restore some of

its original joyful spirit and forward movement. The decision to devote time and energy to working on developing a deeper connection with oneself and another can be deeply life-changing. The resulting discoveries and new possibilities can surpass any previously imagined. You might even end up grateful for the unwelcome struggles that demanded you make this extra effort - and led you to find unexpected resources in your partnership and within yourself.

The journey of committed couplehood can draw the worst and the best out of both people, since one of its major reasons for being may be to bring disowned parts of the self from the Shadow into the light. The triggering of unhealed wounds from childhood is inevitable in this process, as is the emergence of rigid patterns of self-defense. In addition, the partners' most basic assumptions about themselves and each other, including previously comfortable aspects of masculinity or femininity can be called into question, sometimes threatening the fundamental sense of self.

Commitment and courage are needed to face and deal with conflicts arising from differences once experienced as charming that have ended up seeming irreconcilable. If both people are brave and determined enough to slow down and pay more attention to the existence of differing parts within themselves, there is a good chance they'll begin to

change their pain into personal growth. This path of transformation can be a lot of work, especially when it is a new direction. The primary requirement is movement out of habits of conditioned reactivity - which often are connected to childhood woundings or Dominator thinking - into the spacious realm of fresh possibilities that come from consciousness and choice.

One of the keys to traveling well together is a curiosity about what is really happening. An excellent tool for meeting this need to know and understand yourself and your relationship is the practice of mindfulness, a form of meditation. This is a way of slowing down and focusing your awareness so that you notice much more of the experience of your mind, body, and emotions - without the necessity to act or react. Simply sitting, standing, or walking along, paying closer, more concentrated yet relaxed attention, yields a very different inner experience, and a strengthened Aware Ego. One of the primary changes that can result is an increase in the number of available paths for action because of an openness to more of your own thoughts and feelings. The Couples Workbook attempts to foster this habit of non-judging and non-reactive awareness as particularly helpful in relationships. Partly by increasing possibilities for conscious choices that free them from Dominator thinking, mindfulness can guide couples onto the Partnership Way.

The practice of paying attention to internal and external experiencing is one way to guard against slipping into Dominator attitudes, which are no more life-enhancing in women than they have been in men. It can be a major temptation to follow the established pattern - and attempt to reverse the millenia-old hierarchy of the genders by choosing judgment and objectification rather than looking for a common ground and sharing responsibility for change. As Claudia Bepko and Jo-Ann Krestan write in Singing at the Top of Our Lungs: Women, Love and Creativity ...

It doesn't help to swing to the opposite extreme of overvaluing relationship more than agency and autonomy or to now overvalue femaleness instead of maleness. What is important is to resolve the split - to know that we are all autonomous only within the context of connection ... and that love as agency is the domain of (us all).

In "Helping Men in Couple Relationships," a chapter of Richard Meth and Robert Pasick's Men in Therapy: The Challenge of Change, psychologist Barry Gordon and family therapist Jo Ann Allen offer exercises specifically aimed at increasing the ability of couples to see their struggles in relation to their distorted conditioned assumptions and expectations about gender. By establishing a gender-based framework for understanding their differing feelings, roles and styles of communication, both women and men are freed from some of the disheartening self-criticisms and blame that characterize hurting

relationships. A few of their ideas are summarized below, with modifications.

- 1/ Develop a short dictionary - as a shared project - of words that are typically misunderstood in your relationship, beginning with ones that are gender-linked for either one of you - and thinking of recent conflicts that grew out of trying to talk together
- 2/ Practice together de-coding your indirect messages - catching your own as often as possible and owning the hidden meanings - and if you notice your partner's before he or she does, share your observation and invite (without pressuring) him or her to consider the possibility of a masked intention
- 3/ Alternate days for being in charge of decision-making in the home - to promote sharing as well as awareness of how it feels to hold this power and responsibility and to be without it. Specifically notice to what extent you are inclined toward empathic mutuality (or not) when you are in charge
- 4/ Pay specific attention to angry feelings in your relationship by keeping a daily log where you record them as much as possible as they happen - ask yourself about unmet needs that underlie these feelings - and when possible use your logs as the basis for a discussion of these needs and of what each of you does with your anger
- 5/ Notice "pursuer-distancer" dynamics between you - and try to get clear about specific ways each of you seeks closeness or tries to get "space" when needed - again paying particular attention to indirect messages
- 6/ Carry out a gender-reversal for 1-2 days, during which each imagines how the other gender would respond and imitates that - keep a log of what you notice about ways you have changed your own behavior and how you perceive your partner changing. Use these observations to explore the lessons each of you learned growing up about your gender-roles. Then repeat the gender-reversal some time after this discussion, seeing if you can more accurately represent your partner's internalized assumptions about his or her own gender-role

The conscious effort to learn more about how gender conditioning affects yourself and your partner will almost inevitably yield greater understanding and empathy, and a possible lessening of at least some of your relationship tensions.

Janet Surrey, one of the senior members of the Stone Center, and her partner Stephen Bergman, mentioned earlier, have been co-leading workshops nationally and internationally for the past six years on gender and relationship. In their jointly authored working paper, "The Man-Woman Relationship: Impasses and Possibilities," they describe their workshop format and offer ideas for developing another of the key elements in successful couples - mutuality - through activities that balance attention to and validation of gender-linked preferences for both people. These valuable suggestions, adapted with modifications and additions, are listed below.

- 1/ Visualizing the relationship: imaging colors, textures, sounds, motions, or animals that come to mind when focusing on your sense of or feelings about your intimate partnership - sharing these verbally - or expressing them through some creative medium - drawing, painting, collage, music-making, or movement
- 2/ Doing a relational inventory: a shared assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of your relationship - also listing areas of complementarity, where one person's so-called weakness makes room for the other's strength to shine
- 3/ Writing a relational purpose statement: each person first composing his or her own separate responses to questions such as "What is the purpose of our relationship?" or "What are we together to do or to learn?" or "What gifts is our relationship meant to

give to the world?" "What is my vision of our higher potential as a couple?" Then joining together to work out a shared version

4/ Practicing respect for differences in relational time: using the following tools for ensuring the tendencies of both partners will be honored

- the check-in: a simple way for either partner to initiate a brief exchange of thoughts or feelings - limited to an I-statement by each partner that allows a minimal connection to occur
- the check-out: a simple way for either partner to leave a discussion or interaction temporarily by announcing this intention - and - by indicating when he or she will be checking back in
- the 20-minute rule: an agreement to talk about a troubling subject daily, but for only 20 minutes - allowing both to know that the subject will be dealt with - and that these discussions will be time-limited

5/ Shared projects: brainstorming possible joint projects, then together choosing two of them, one from each person's area of interest or expertise, (or both from unrelated areas), that can add new dimensions through sharing, including increased enjoyment for both people from the collaboration

6/ Developing a private language of words or phrases with silly or sexy meanings connected to your history that can be drawn on in stressful times to snap you both out of serious stuckness and into more fluid playful connectedness

Playfulness in general is a quality of interaction that fosters mutuality in couples and greatly eases their journey. Intentionally drawing out and involving the Inner Child allows adults to let down their usual defenses in order to experience their common ground. Although gender conditioning affects this realm like any other, and the differing preferences of the Inner Boy and the Inner Girl

must be considered, in relation to play motivation is high for enjoyment. This shared goal, and the probability that each will benefit more from the presence of the other, increase couples' chances of constructive cooperation. Play also provides an opportunity for the Inner Children to meet and share on a level of activity that reaches beyond words, which so often lead grown men and women into misunderstandings.

Earlier in The Couples Workbook, you were given a list of experiences (pages 226-229) that could bring you closer to your child within, and then asked to check each category for activities you might be willing to try in order to draw out your Inner Child. Now you and your partner are invited to turn back to that original list and go over it again, without talking. Then each of you quickly write down (separately) at least two activities from each category that you would like to share with your partner. In other words, ask your Inner Girl or Inner Boy how he or she would like to play with the child within your partner.

1/ Nurturing _____

2/ Physical Activity _____

3/ Sensory Experience _____

4/ Animals and Nature _____

5/ Music _____

6/ Emotions _____

7/ Humor _____

8/ Playfulness _____

9/ Creativity _____

10/ Wonder _____

Now that you and your partner have listed twenty possibilities for shared activities your inner children might love, each of you pick ten of your favorites out of these and compile them into one joint list, in no special order, eliminating the categories for now, but consulting with each other to be sure that the feelings and needs of both the Inner Girl and the Inner Boy are well represented.

1/ _____

11/ _____

2/ _____

12/ _____

3/ _____

13/ _____

4/ _____

14/ _____

5/ _____

15/ _____

6/ _____	16/ _____
7/ _____	17/ _____
8/ _____	18/ _____
9/ _____	19/ _____
10/ _____	20/ _____

From your joint list, choose the top ten you agree upon and prioritize them according to which ones would be the easiest and most fun for you to do together, and also the most likely to actually carry out very soon.

1/ _____	6/ _____
2/ _____	7/ _____
3/ _____	8/ _____
4/ _____	9/ _____
5/ _____	10/ _____

~~~~~

### Crucial Commitment #3

You and your partner are now invited to make one more crucial commitment to yourselves and to each other. This is a promise to actively nurture your relationship - by playing together. Being still for a moment ... listen for voices of protest from any parts of yourself that might fear they have something to lose. Now write your reservations here, if you have any. "I do not want to make this commitment because ... "

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Ask yourselves if any of your reservations is important enough to stop you from making this commitment, and write your response here. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now asking yourself why you would like to make this commitment, write those reasons below. "I want to make this commitment because ... " \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now, considering your reservations, if any, and not stopped by them, write below the following affirmation of your intention: "I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit myself to actively nurturing my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ by regularly finding and making time and opportunities for play that will please and honor both the Inner Girl and the Inner Boy."

Partner #1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

-----

Partner #2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

~~~~~

Congratulations for completing The Couples Workbook!

May you continue to move in courageous, committed, and
conscious relation with yourself, your partner, and all of
creation.

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## An Open Letter to Couples Counselors

This message is directed to all those in the helping professions who dare to attempt to guide becalmed or storm-bound couples out of "irons" or raging seas into somewhat smoother sailing. Our work is not, as you surely know, a matter of finding them a safe harbor. There is no safe harbor for intimate relationship, which is inherently a journey, not a destination, and one that requires on-going risk-taking, if it is to be growthful and fully alive.

The Couples Workbook provides a concrete adjunct method for a focused exploration of a couple relationship, or for an individual to inquire into his or her experience of intimate connection. Not intended to be comprehensive in its treatment of couples' issues, the Workbook aims to assist in the reinforcement of their commitment and the restoration (or initiation) of healthy relational movement through the following processes:

- 1/ fostering recognition of and a degree of detachment or disidentification from the often painfully polarized positions of partners - from each other and parts of the self
- 2/ promoting awareness of the Inner Child in each individual as an important personal resource and a powerful influence on intimate relationship
- 3/ promoting awareness of the Inner Parent as the best potential source of nurturance and guidance for the Inner Child within each individual

- 4/ strengthening the Aware Ego and its capacity for hearing and balancing the feelings and needs of all parts of the self, especially the Inner Child and the Inner Parent
- 5/ encouraging curiosity and willingness of each individual to explore his or her Shadow-self, where disowned potentials reside - which powerfully affect relationships
- 6/ promoting awareness of specific positive and negative Shadow elements that relate to gender conditioning, including aspects of the Inner Girl, the Inner Boy, and the Inner Parents
- 7/ promoting awareness of the "Dominator" mind-set and model of human relations, and its systemic destructive impact on individuals, couples, and the experience of human differences
- 8/ promoting awareness of the historical phenomenon of "Partnership" social organization, and potentials for healing and fulfillment for individuals, couples and society through consciously recreating the Partnership Way in intimate relationships
- 9/ providing opportunities for expanding awareness of the self-in-relation, and deepening mutually empathic connection with the partner, the relational matrix, and with the self
- 10/ eliciting behavioral reinforcement of learning via exercises which require application of concepts through writing, inner and outer dialogue, action, imagination, relaxation and playful interaction
- 11/ promoting a process-orientation to individual development and to intimate relationship through the concept of couplehood as a journey of two fluid and multi-faceted beings moving in interdependent reciprocal relation within intra-personal, inter-personal and transpersonal systems

The Couples Workbook may be applied in therapy with couples presenting a wide variety of problems. Its self-help format makes it potentially useful to couples not receiving therapeutic guidance, or those seeking enrichment

of a stable well-functioning relationship. Because work with the Inner Child contains the possibility of tapping into feelings or conflicts that have been out of awareness for many years, it is important, as always, to continually assess couples for issues of childhood abuse or other trauma while encouraging their application of this concept.

I hope you and your client couples will find The Couples Workbook useful, enlightening, and fun.

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## C H A P T E R VI

### EVALUATION OF THE COUPLES WORKBOOK

In order to elicit feedback on the potential usefulness of The Couples Workbook for couples and for individuals wanting to focus on relationship issues, a ten-page questionnaire was administered to five seasoned therapists known to the author in various parts of the United States. These therapists range in age from forty to sixty-five and have from ten to twenty-five years of experience in counseling couples. Their professional degrees include a Masters in Counseling, two Masters in Social Work (one combined with a Masters in Child Development), a Doctorate in Theology, and a Doctorate in Psychology. Their work as therapists is performed in private practice, hospital, and agency settings, and sometimes in combinations of these. Two supervise other therapists, four run weekly groups, and one gives weekend workshops. All work with adult individuals and couples, three with individual adolescents, two with individual children, and two with families.

All work from an eclectic theoretical orientation, drawing on all four "forces" - psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic and transpersonal. Some of the particular elements that contribute to their practice are: Family Systems, Gestalt Therapy, Psychosynthesis, Jungian



theory, Ericksonian Hypnosis, Neurolinguistic Programming, work with the Inner Child and Addictions and Trauma Recovery Processes. All use their own integrations of various of these elements in their couples counseling. Other aspects that were mentioned as particularly helpful with couples were reciprocal communications skills training, goal-setting, and Shadow-work.

In their couples counseling, all work with individual members on issues directly related to childhood, both separately and conjointly. All also work with members on current relationships with the family-of-origin, three in conjoint couples sessions, one conjointly with members of the family-of-origin, and two with members of the couple in separate sessions only. All work with individual members of couples on developing relationships with subpersonalities or parts of the self. All also help individuals in couples to become aware of and build relationships with (their own concept of) the Inner Child. All work with members of couple relationships on issues directly identified as the effects of gender conditioning and/or sexism. All but one typically teach couples some theory of stages of development of the couple relationship.

Each of these therapists has been divorced, and two have been remarried for ten and nineteen years. All have from one to four children, with ages ranging from ten to forty-five. One also has two grown step-children.

All except one have been in couples counseling themselves with a partner, and in more than one series of sessions with more than one counselor. All found at least part of these experiences "helpful to me as an individual" and "painful and helpful," although two characterized it as "somewhat helpful," two as "generally positive but not getting to the root of our problems," two as "helpful to my partner as an individual," one as "hurtful to me as an individual," and only one experience of couples counseling was described as "very helpful to us as a couple."

The most helpful elements of their experience of couples counseling were: "learning to tune into the other's perspective," and "seeing what underlying issues have gotten triggered in me," or "learning about my own blind places and unconscious stuff." Other helpful aspects mentioned were: "empathy," "forum for planned discussion of issues," "coming out of the counselor role and telling me the relationship would not get better and to focus on my own development," "making us aware of our different stages of development," "spiritual perspective," and "therapist not taking sides." The least helpful (or hurtful) elements of their experiences of couples counseling were: "formula-type therapy," "too intellectual a stance ... that sacrificed compassion for insight," "rigidity about stages of development," and "just letting us talk to each other."

The therapists were asked to list five to ten major issues or problems that bring couples into counseling, "as you see them, not necessarily as they describe them initially." Among these - Addiction, Co-dependency, Mental Illness of Spouse, and Step-parenting Issues were most mentioned. The next most frequently listed problems were: Communication, Family-of-Origin Issues, Childhood Trauma of One or Both Partners, and Conflict/Anger/Rage. Other issues mentioned were: Sexual Problems, Infidelity, Gender Issues, Fusion, Depression, Secrets, Violence, Flight from Intimacy, and Narcissism/Immaturity.

When asked to list five to ten major issues or problems "that couples themselves name as their reasons for coming into counseling," Lack of (or Poor) Communication, Sexual Problems, and Step-parenting Issues were most mentioned. The next most frequently listed problems were: Fighting, (The Possibility of) Divorce, Money, Infidelity, Spouse's Drinking or Addiction, and Spouse's Mental Illness, including Trauma Recovery. Also listed were: Distancing by One Partner, He/She Is Driving Me Crazy, He/She Refuses to Do His/Her Share, One Partner Feeling Entitled ..., Value/Ethical Differences, and Depression.

Therapists were asked to rate each of thirty sections of The Couples Workbook from Least (1) to Most (10) on the following four dimensions:

- A/ General theoretical validity
- B/ Specific fit of ideas with your own theoretical orientation to couples counseling
- C/ General potential usefulness of each section in your practice of couples counseling
- D/ Specific potential fit of exercises into your practice of couples counseling

They were asked to describe the "immediate usefulness" The Couples Workbook might have with couples in their current practice. They were then asked to list the five sections they rated the highest for potential usefulness and to write "a few words or phrases to indicate why each might be particularly useful as an adjunct to your practice with couples." Four of five therapists complied with this request. The remaining therapist rated all sections with an 8 on Scale #A (General theoretical validity), a 6 on Scale #B (Fit of ideas with therapist's theoretical orientation) and a 9 on Scale #C (General potential usefulness), and reported that all the sections "are good depending on the couple."

Comments on the immediate usefulness of The Couples Workbook included the following:

"A wonderful way to extend the couples work I do."

"The non-threatening/critical explication of gender bias as a barrier to relational intimacy along with the beautifully presented inner child/parent work makes me eager to incorporate the Workbook into my practice."

"Especially potentially useful when one partner is in therapy and the other one will not come in."



"Would work best in an on-going weekly couples group. With individual couples in private sessions I would suggest a part or parts."

"Useful workshop design."

"I will likely begin to use several of the exercises right away."

The section rated most highly for potential usefulness by all was "Getting to Know Your Inner Child." Comments included: "the most important piece of couples or personal work - usually fosters compassion," "great to de-focus on blaming mechanism in many couples and to look at internal issues," and "have not used this concept in couples as much as in individual therapy, but see its potential usefulness." Three sections also received more frequent high ratings: "Crucial Commitment #1" "Your Inner Child and Your Shadow" and "Where Oh Where Has My Little Boy Gone." "Crucial Commitment #1" was referred to by one therapist as "a crucial element in my theoretical foundation." Another therapist mentioned having had people write out commitments in relation to eating disorders or suicidality, and being interested in expanding the use of this idea to couples work. Comments on "Your Inner Child and Your Shadow" included: "stops the fix-him, fix-her tendency," "very useful to get in touch with `that kid' and make the commitment to self-care," and "biting the bullet and looking at what you've avoided for decades." In relation to "Where Oh Where Has My Little Boy Gone," one therapist remarked: "inevitably the reaction of male

clients to the little boy image is the first step to emotional breakthrough."

Other comments about highly rated sections included the following:

"Taking A Step Back" - "takes them out of the forest for the trees; reminds them how much they know and how complex their situations are."

"The Way It Was" - "one couple hasn't been able to let go of their conflict in order to remember their initial attraction and situation - this should help."

"Where Are You on the Couples Journey Map" - "useful as insight tool and to help couples define what is going on in helpful ways."

"Who Needs Help - Who Is the Helper" - "introduction of Aware Ego or Wise Self most helpful to disidentify and get into space of emptiness and non-significance."

"The Long Bag We Drag" - "one of the most useful chapters in the book."

"Vulnerability, Power and the Shadow" - "helps with power issues, trust and sexuality."

"Empathy, Mutuality and Listening" - "helps with communication."

"As the Twig Is Bent..." - "true picture of every couple I work with."

"Courageous, Creative Conflict" - "will use definitely with couples - probably this week."

The least useful section by far for three of four therapists was "Seven Ways of Knowing" - with similar explanatory responses such as "interesting, but a bit too theoretical to be practically useful with my clients," "description too academic" and "too left-brained." Three other sections received frequently lower ratings: "Gender

Difference and the Shadow," "Too Much History, Too Little Herstory" and "Crucial Commitment #3." Comments included: on "Gender Difference and the Shadow" - "more difficult to explain/understand given my clientele than some of the other sections." On "Too Much History, Too Little Herstory" - "while beautifully presented, the theoretical aspects may be difficult or even be perceived as irrelevant in clinical use." On "Crucial Commitment #3" - "important but a bit too unwieldy a commitment for me to put much emphasis on with my clients."

Other comments included the following:

"Taking A Step Back" - "I want to know about illness and addictions."

"Love Stories" - "somewhat redundant, though it helps to elicit a fuller picture of initial attraction."

"Empathy, Mutuality and Listening" - "difference between empathy and mutuality not clear to me."

"Crucial Commitment #2" - "usually by the time they would be doing this commitment - with me - they would feel so much better that they would not be coming in for therapy. But certainly good for couples to do on their own."

"Cross Cultural Communication" - "could be incorporated in another chapter - pronouns he and she labored and too long."

"Courageous Creative Conflict" - "exercise is too unwieldy - may work for me in a workshop setting."

"Traveling Well Together" - "too long."

Questions #4-9 in the Questionnaire asked for evaluation of specific aspects of The Couples Workbook, such as length, the order of the sections and clarity, as

well as requesting suggestions for additions, omissions, or any other changes that might enhance its usefulness.

Therapists generally found the length good for their own use with couples, but possibly too long to give to the couples themselves in toto. Two therapists suggested that the length would work well in a couples group setting. Comments on the order of the sections included "logical and coherent" "flows appropriately" and "fine" - with one suggestion for "clearer breaks between the sections." In relation to the clarity of the presentations comments ranged from "extremely clear and accessible" to "simpler vocabulary for agency clients would be beneficial" and "parts would be more useful to my more intellectual clients; would not use the whole Workbook with all clients, especially parts with lengthy theoretical explanation."

There were no sections recommended for omission, although one therapist commented that "many of our clients are not culturally ready to make Crucial Commitment #2" (re: inner child and gender difference.) One therapist noted that The Couples Workbook "leaves out gay and lesbian couples" and another suggested "adding a perspective for same gender couples," while also assuring that "there is much here that works for same gender couples." Changes recommended included:

"make it more universally understandable by a wider range of clients; i.e., language less thesis-like and more accessible"



"have couples do some exercises in a new situation/environment - like a date or outing."

"[Add] some of the behavior differences in Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus I found really useful - e.g., men's tendency to withdraw - 'go into the cave' - to solve problems while women want to talk about it right away"

"appreciating men working and supporting children as ways of caring [are] not acknowledged - also [their] willingness to be monogamous - contrary to biology and cultural conditioning"

"would like to see a chapter on the emotionally incestuous Moms who keep men boys [which] diminishes capacity for passion in relationships - see Bly - On Men and Women videotape"

"would have a separate chapter for play and the need to call a moratorium on 'transformation' for a few hours."

"you might want to offer a counselor's edition in a ring binder with the exercises printed in such a way as to come out of binder for easy photocopying - to give an exercise to a client who might not be using the whole Workbook"

"perhaps publishing an edition for therapists in a loose-leaf notebook format in order for the therapist to make copies as needed for clients - for use in therapist-facilitated work"

The remainder of the Questionnaire concerns kinds of couples to whom each therapist might recommend The Couples Workbook, and asks for any other feedback not already invited. Four out of five therapists responded that they would recommend the Workbook to couples in their practices to incorporate as an adjunct to their counseling sessions. Five out of five therapists also said they would recommend it to couples as an adjunct activity to counseling to be

done outside sessions - and - to couples not in formal counseling wanting to improve their relationship.

Couples in which only one member seems motivated to improve the relationship - and - couples who are separated but still wanting to work on their relationship - would have the Workbook recommended to them by four out of five therapists responding. Two therapists would not use the Workbook with couples with a very long history of dysfunction, and three might recommend the Workbook to be used by such couples with their assistance.

All therapists responded that they would recommend The Couples Workbook to those in a couples therapy group. Other suggested settings for the application of the Workbook were: a women's therapy group, a pre-marital couples group, a couples workshop, and "for people not in a relationship at the moment - to prepare for the next one." Cautions about recommending The Couples Workbook were expressed in relation to couples in which one or both are actively abusing substances, have untreated mental illness or rage disorders, or in which there is a possibility of sexual abuse or ritual cult abuse - especially in relation to the use of trance-like exercises.

In response to the optional question asking whether or not they would consider using The Couples Workbook to help with problem-solving or to enhance their own intimate relationship - four out of five therapists answered

affirmatively and enthusiastically. (The remaining therapist responded that this question was "not applicable.") Comments included: "Yes, especially the chapters on projection and shadow-work" and "Definitely. The experiential exercises are rich with possibilities for the kind of experiences that can open couples up to one another and create intimacy at the same time as they explore problems."

Other feedback included these remarks:

"a really good job"

"an exciting piece of work; parts of it are useful for any client whether in a relationship or not"

"there is a tension in the Workbook around the issue of gender/power ... and it is presented in a way that will both attract some people and turn off some people. It is a factor I would consider when I suggest it."

"exciting, adventurous, not for the faint of heart - a very potentially empowering tool, which I've already learned from and would be delighted to weave into my long bag of tricks!"

## C H A P T E R    VII

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Pragmatic evaluation of The Couples Workbook (Chapter V) was elicited from a select sample of professional practitioners of couples counseling chosen for the breadth of their experience and their level of expertise. A limited preliminary study of the potential usefulness of The Couples Workbook to couples therapists and their clients was accomplished through administration of a ten-page questionnaire.

The results may be summarized by stating that all respondents found the instrument potentially very useful to them in their work with couples, with some variation in how each would use it, and with a great deal of variation as to which parts would be most and least useful to each therapist. The two exceptions to this trend were the section found most useful by four out of five respondents ("Getting to Know Your Inner Child") and the section found least useful by three out of five respondents ("Seven Ways of Knowing.") A particular distinction between these two extremes and generally characterizing the differentiation throughout the ratings was the polarity of importance and immediate applicability in therapy with couples versus a too heavily theoretical or academic orientation to the material that required interpretation for clients.

Because of the variety of approaches to couples counseling represented - each therapist has developed his



Because of the variety of approaches to couples counseling represented - each therapist has developed his or her unique eclectic blend of elements - the variation in application is considered a positive result. The intention in creating The Couples Workbook was to provide an adjunct to formal therapy that could be used in many different ways for focused exploration of couple relationships. It is also possible that there might be some conceptual unclarity that resulted in inconsistent interpretations and varied responses.

It is not clear why one therapist did not comply with the request to rate each of thirty sections separately on four dimensions, and instead gave one general score to all the sections on only three of the four scales. Responses in most other categories were adequate, and an explanation offered - that "all [of the exercises] are good depending on the couple." In addition, there is some contradiction in this therapist's rating of all the sections with a relatively low score (6 on a scale from 1 as lowest to 10 as highest) on Scale #B (Fit of ideas with therapist's theoretical orientation), while giving a relatively high score (9) on Scale #C (General potential usefulness in your practice of couples counseling). It may be that this respondent interpreted Scale #C as a measure of the potential usefulness of the sections in couples counseling in general and not specifically in relation to his or her

own practice. It is also possible that these responses indicate a willingness to incorporate unfamiliar material into the counseling practice regardless of the relative lack of theoretical fit - because of its high potential usefulness and adaptability. Since Scale #D (Specific potential fit of exercises in your practice of couples counseling) was not given any score, this measure cannot be used for comparison or corroboration, and possible meanings are uncertain, which raises the question of clarity of the directive and of the Scales themselves.

Another area for speculation is that of individual orientations to the dimension of gender difference and sexism. No questions were included in the survey instrument to draw out information related to the respondents' gender, gender inequality, or attitudes toward or experiences of domination and subordination. Only one question pertained to this concern in relation to therapeutic content: all responded that they do work with members of couples on "issues directly identified as the effects of gender conditioning and/or sexism." However, this unanimity does not at all eliminate the possibility of wide variation in meanings and content of such discussions. In addition, the factor of gender might well have been examined as a possible primary determinant of therapists' evaluations, since it figures so prominently in the theoretical construct fundamental to The Couples Workbook.

Therapists comments revealed an appreciation of the theoretical passages in The Couples Workbook for their own edification, and in relation to most sections, for use with couples or to give to them to read and work with on their own. At the same time, a few criticisms of the academic nature of the language and content were made, with two particular suggestions for adaptation to allow "agency clients" or less "intellectual" clients to have access to the material. This issue presents a challenge to the author, since some of the ideas included (such as the historical phenomenon of ancient Partnership societies) may well require a stretch of curiosity and imagination that some clients may not be willing or able to give.

It seems that one implication of this result is that there is at least a slight tension between the intention of targeting of couples therapists as potential users of The Couples Workbook and the focus on couples themselves applying The Workbook as a method of self-help. It may be that this tension creates contradictory pulls within the material and/or in the format. Questions arise as to whether or not therapists should be the decision-makers in relation to the distribution of this instrument - allowing informed choice about who might most benefit from what parts of it at what point in their therapy - or - if individuals and couples might just as well self-select as likely or unlikely candidates for this form of exploration.

Recommendations the respondents would make in relation to this issue were elicited in part by the final section of the questionnaire. Some concern was expressed about couples with a very long history of dysfunction, and particular caution was emphasized about assessing for active substance abuse, untreated mental illness, rage disorders or sexual or cult abuse. Other than these categories of dysfunction, there was unanimity on offering The Couples Workbook to couples to use as an adjunct to counseling without supervision from the therapist.

The overall implication seems to be that, for the most part, The Workbook has potentially wide applicability, both in and out of counseling. A particularly strong (i.e., unanimous) recommendation for its use in a couples therapy group setting, along with one comment that it provides a "useful workshop format," suggests to this author the possibility that both the pacing and group support of such collective approaches might offer certain advantages equal to or greater than those afforded in individual or couple sessions. This idea seems worthy of further consideration, and perhaps a trial application to discover its potentials.

Publication in the form of a looseleaf binder was encouraged by three out of five therapists, all emphasizing the greater ease for couples counselors of photocopying sections for clients. This suggestion might prove useful,



although it seems initially unwieldy, and definitely merits investigation in relation to its practicality.

A major focus of The Couples Workbook and of this dissertation is the integration of the concept of the gendered Inner Child. It seems that the questionnaire did not elicit much response to the introduction of this particular theoretical and practical construct. Although the section which describes the psychological basis for the Inner Girl and Inner Boy and the gender-stereotyped Inner Parents, "As the Twig Is Bent..." received one powerfully validating comment - "true picture of every couple I work with," there was very little response to these images or their potential usefulness in couples counseling. This may be due to a weakness in the design of the questionnaire, which for the most part avoids asking directly for specific feedback about these basic concepts.

In fact, an accurate generalization would be that there were more highly rated sections in the first half of The Workbook - before the issue of gender difference is raised - than in the latter half, which focuses very much on exploring and addressing the effects of gender bias on couple relationships. The implications of this unexpected result are certainly unclear to this author. It may be, as suggested above, that attitudes and opinions on this controversial issue tend to be less easily expressed - especially if they differ with what appear to be the

author's views. Other possibilities are that the therapists consulted are either very familiar with these issues, already working with them in their own ways, and not open to a new approach - or - that they found it a very natural adaptation and so easy to absorb that it didn't raise much response.

Ratings for the sections in the chapters of the second half - The Chalice and the Blade and The Inner Male and the Inner Female - are only slightly lower than those for the earlier chapters, except for very low ratings by one therapist who sees a significant number of same-gender couples, for whom the exclusive focus on gender difference and heterosexuality made many of the latter sections less potentially useful. An adaptation for same-gender couples was suggested by two therapists, although the one who gave low ratings to the gender difference sections also commented that much in The Couples Workbook is applicable without adaptation to same-gender couples.

This issue relates to a particular focus for further research and possible development of another similar instrument as the logical and perhaps necessary follow-up to this one. In The Couples Workbook, the focus is primarily on differentiation of parts of the self - Inner Child, Inner Parent, Persona, Shadow - and on bringing to awareness possible manifestations of differential gender conditioning - in the form of Inner Boy, Inner Girl,

intimate relationship between the sexes and practical ideas for ameliorating their effects.

The original intention of this work was to include movement from this orientation toward one of acknowledging, identifying, exploring and addressing therapeutically the integration and dynamics of all these elements within both members of a couple relationship. Such an emphasis would more clearly represent the author's awareness that many, if not most, aspects of socially conditioned womanhood and manhood are not by any means exclusive to either sex, and that both women and men - especially in the current era - exhibit a multitude of unique blends of masculine and feminine attitudes, energies and qualities. Ultimately, the earlier vision proved unwieldy for this dissertation, which required a more limited scope, and now may provide a foundation for further building of theory and practice along those lines. It is hoped that the concept of the gendered Inner Child will grow and develop through therapeutic application, and be incorporated into a workbook or into another practical tool to assist couples and their therapists with these particular complexities of intimate relationship.

## APPENDIX

### COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE TO THERAPISTS

#### Cover Letter to Therapists Evaluating The Couples Workbook

Dear Therapist:

As part of my doctoral degree requirements at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts, I have written a workbook for couples, an instrument intended to be used for self-help by couples or as an adjunct to formal couples therapy. Because you have agreed to read and evaluate The Couples Workbook as to its potential usefulness in your own practice of couples counseling, I am sending it along with a ten-page questionnaire.

Your responses will be compiled with those of other therapists, and this qualitative data and its interpretation will be the basis for Chapter VI of my dissertation, A Systemic Transpersonal Adjunct to Couples Counseling: Integrating A Gendered Concept of the Inner Child.

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study. I hope that your own work will benefit in some way from reading The Couples Workbook.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Howard Corrin  
Ed.D. Candidate



## Questionnaire for Therapists Evaluating The Couples Workbook

**\*Part A - Information About Your Work with Couples\***

1. Please describe briefly your general orientation to counseling or psychotherapy, including mention of the major theoretical elements of your approach.
2. Please describe briefly any particular approach or approaches to couples counseling that have proven most helpful in your practice so far.
3. How many years have you been counseling couples? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Please list 5-10 major issues or problems that bring couples into counseling in your experience, as you see them, not necessarily as they describe them initially.
  - 1/
  - 2/
  - 3/
  - 4/
  - 5/
  - 6/

- 7/
- 8/
- 9/
- 10/

5. Please name 5-10 major issues or problems that couples themselves name as their reasons for coming into counseling.

- 1/
- 2/
- 3/
- 4/
- 5/
- 6/
- 7/
- 8/
- 9/
- 10/

|                                                                                                                                 | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 6. In your practice of couples counseling, do you:                                                                              |            |           |
| 1/ work with individual members on issues directly related to childhood and family-of-origin?                                   |            |           |
| In separate sessions?                                                                                                           |            |           |
| Conjointly?                                                                                                                     |            |           |
| Both separately and conjointly?                                                                                                 |            |           |
| 2/ work with individual members on developing or changing their current relationships with members of their families-of-origin? |            |           |
| Separately?                                                                                                                     |            |           |
| Conjointly, as a couple?                                                                                                        |            |           |
| Conjointly, with members of the family-of-origin?                                                                               |            |           |

- |                                                                                                                       | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 3/ work with individual members on developing relationships with sub-personalities or parts of the self?              | ___        | ___       |
| 4/ work with individual members to become aware of and build a relationship with (your concept of) the Inner Child?   | ___        | ___       |
| 5/ work with members of the couple on issues directly identified as the effects of gender conditioning and/or sexism? | ___        | ___       |
| 5/ teach couples a theory of stages of development of couple relationships?                                           | ___        | ___       |

[The following questions are optional,  
although your answers would be appreciated.]

7. What is your age? 30-34\_\_\_ 35-39\_\_\_ 40-44\_\_\_  
45-49\_\_\_ 50-54\_\_\_ 55-59\_\_\_ 60-64\_\_\_ 65-70\_\_\_

8. What graduate degree or degrees do you have?

---

9. What is the setting (or settings) for your current practice of psychotherapy?

(please check all that apply)

Agency\_\_\_ Hospital\_\_\_ Private practice\_\_\_

Supervising other therapists\_\_\_

Leading weekly group(s)\_\_\_

Leading weekend (or longer) workshops\_\_\_

10. Which of the following do you see in your practice?

Individuals\_\_\_ Couples\_\_\_ Families\_\_\_

Adults\_\_\_ Adolescents\_\_\_ Children\_\_\_

11. What is your current relationship status?

(please check all that apply)

Single\_\_\_ Separated\_\_\_ Divorced\_\_\_

Living with a partner\_\_\_ Married\_\_\_

Committed relationship\_\_\_ Remarried\_\_\_

Significant but undefined relationship\_\_\_

12. How many children do you have in each age group?  
 Ages 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-12 \_\_\_\_\_ 13-15 \_\_\_\_\_ 16-19 \_\_\_\_\_  
 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-45 \_\_\_\_\_

13. How many step-children do you have?  
 Ages 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-12 \_\_\_\_\_ 13-15 \_\_\_\_\_ 16-19 \_\_\_\_\_  
 20-24 \_\_\_\_\_ 25-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-34 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-45 \_\_\_\_\_

14. Have you ever been in couples counseling  
 with a partner? (as clients) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Once (one series of sessions)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 More than one series of sessions? \_\_\_\_\_  
 With more than one counselor? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Would you describe your experience(s) as:  
 (please check all that apply)

Very helpful to us as a couple \_\_\_\_\_  
 Helpful to me as an individual \_\_\_\_\_  
 Helpful to my partner as an individual \_\_\_\_\_  
 Somewhat helpful to us as a couple \_\_\_\_\_  
 Generally positive, but not getting  
 at the roots of our problems \_\_\_\_\_  
 or leading to lasting changes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hurtful to me as an individual \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hurtful to my partner as an individual \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not helpful to our relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hurtful to our relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
 Painful and helpful to us \_\_\_\_\_

16. Please describe briefly what you think was most and  
 least helpful about your couples counselor's  
 approach(es) to helping you and your partner with  
 your relationship problems? (You might mention  
 factors of theoretical orientation, attitude or  
 relational elements such as empathy or  
 genuineness, behavioral techniques, pacing,  
 emotional depth, political or spiritual values - or  
 anything that comes to mind in response to the  
 questions: what was helpful? - and - what did you  
 learn that made a difference in your relationship?)  
 -WORDS OR PHRASES ARE FINE FOR THIS DESCRIPTION-

Most Helpful:



Least Helpful (or Hurtful):

\*Part B - Ratings of Sections of the Couples Workbook\*

LEAST

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

MOST

Please rate sections of The Couples Workbook according to the following dimensions:

- A. General theoretical validity
- B. Specific fit of ideas with your own theoretical orientation to couples counseling
- C. General potential usefulness of each section in your practice of couples counseling
- D. Specific potential fit of exercises into your practice of couples counseling

|                                       | A | B | C | D |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1/ Taking A Step Back                 | — | — | — | — |
| 2/ Love Stories                       | — | — | — | — |
| 3/ The Way It Was                     | — | — | — | — |
| 4/ If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It    | — | — | — | — |
| 5/ Campbell's Couple's Journey Map    | — | — | — | — |
| 6/ Where Are You on the Map?          | — | — | — | — |
| 7/ Getting to Know Your Inner Child   | — | — | — | — |
| 8/ You Only Hurt the One You Love     | — | — | — | — |
| 9/ Who Needs Help - Who Is the Helper | — | — | — | — |
| 10/ Crucial Commitment #1             | — | — | — | — |
| 11/ The Long Bag We Drag              | — | — | — | — |
| 12/ Your Inner Child/Your Shadow      | — | — | — | — |
| 13/ Vulnerability/Power/Shadow        | — | — | — | — |
| 14/ Gender Difference/Shadow          | — | — | — | — |
| 15/ History/Herstory                  | — | — | — | — |
| 16/ Challenges to Dominator Model     | — | — | — | — |
| 17/ Seven Ways of Knowing             | — | — | — | — |
| 18/ Self-in-Relation                  | — | — | — | — |
| 19/ Empathy, Mutuality, Listening     | — | — | — | — |
| 20/ As the Twig is Bent...            | — | — | — | — |
| 21/ Dominator-Dad                     | — | — | — | — |
| 22/ Where Oh Where...                 | — | — | — | — |

|                                  | A | B | C | D |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 23/ Monster-Mom                  | — | — | — | — |
| 24/ Awakening the Real...        | — | — | — | — |
| 25/ Crucial Commitment #2        | — | — | — | — |
| 26/ Neither Patriarchy Nor...    | — | — | — | — |
| 27/ Cross-Cultural Communication | — | — | — | — |
| 28/ Courageous Creative Conflict | — | — | — | — |
| 29/ Traveling Well Together      | — | — | — | — |
| 30/ Crucial Commitment #3        | — | — | — | — |

\*Part C - Elaboration on Evaluative Responses\*

1. What immediate usefulness does The Couples Workbook have for you with couples in your practice at this time? Please answer generally and also give an example of how a particular couple might benefit from your incorporation of the workbook into your counseling. If it is not useful to you at this time, please explain briefly why not.
2. Please list the 5 sections of The Couples Workbook you gave your highest ratings for potential usefulness. Below each section name, write a few words or phrases to indicate why each might be particularly useful as an adjunct to your practice with couples. Of special interest here is how each section might help with one or more of the problems of couples you listed above in Part A/#4 and #5.

|          | <u>RATING</u> |
|----------|---------------|
| 1/ _____ | _____         |
| _____    |               |
| _____    |               |
| 2/ _____ | _____         |
| _____    |               |
| _____    |               |
| 3/ _____ | _____         |

|    |       |       |
|----|-------|-------|
|    | _____ |       |
|    | _____ |       |
| 4/ | _____ | _____ |
|    | _____ |       |
|    | _____ |       |
| 5/ | _____ | _____ |
|    | _____ |       |
|    | _____ |       |

3. Please list the 5 sections of The Couples Workbook you gave your lowest ratings for potential usefulness. Below each section name, write a few words or phrases to indicate what makes it less valuable to your practice of couples counseling.

|    |       | <u>RATING</u> |
|----|-------|---------------|
| 1/ | _____ | _____         |
|    | _____ |               |
|    | _____ |               |
| 2/ | _____ | _____         |
|    | _____ |               |
|    | _____ |               |
| 3/ | _____ | _____         |
|    | _____ |               |
|    | _____ |               |
| 4/ | _____ | _____         |
|    | _____ |               |
|    | _____ |               |
| 5/ | _____ | _____         |
|    | _____ |               |
|    | _____ |               |

4. Is The Couples Workbook an appropriate and use-able length? Too long? Too short? Please explain briefly.
5. Does the order of the sections make sense to you? Would you rearrange things to make it clearer and easier to use? Please explain briefly.
6. Are there parts that are difficult to understand, that might be valuable to you or to your clients if they were clearer? Please name the sections and explain .
7. Are there sections you would take out altogether, or change completely? Please explain briefly.
8. Are there sections or topics you would like to see added to the workbook to enhance its usefulness? Please explain briefly.



9. What other changes, if any, would you suggest to make The Couples Workbook more useful to your client couples?

|                                                                                                                | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 10. Would you recommend <u>The Couples Workbook</u> to:                                                        |            |           |
| 1/ couples in your practice - to incorporate into counseling sessions as an adjunct in their work with you?    | _____      | _____     |
| 2/ couples in your practice - as an adjunct activity to counseling - to be done outside sessions on their own? | _____      | _____     |
| 3/ couples who are not in formal counseling but want to improve their relationship?                            | _____      | _____     |
| 4/ couples in which only one member seems motivated to improve the relationship?                               | _____      | _____     |
| 5/ couples who are separated, but still wanting to work on their relationship?                                 | _____      | _____     |
| 6/ couples with a very long history of dysfunction?                                                            | _____      | _____     |
| 7/ couples in a couples therapy group?                                                                         | _____      | _____     |
| 11. Please name any other categories of couples for whom you might recommend <u>The Couples Workbook</u> .     |            |           |

12. Please name any categories of couples for whom you would not recommend The Couples Workbook.

13. [Optional] Would you consider using The Couples Workbook to help with problem-solving or to enhance your own intimate relationship? Please explain briefly.

14. If you have any other feedback on the Workbook which this Questionnaire didn't already invite, here is the place for it ....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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